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THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE

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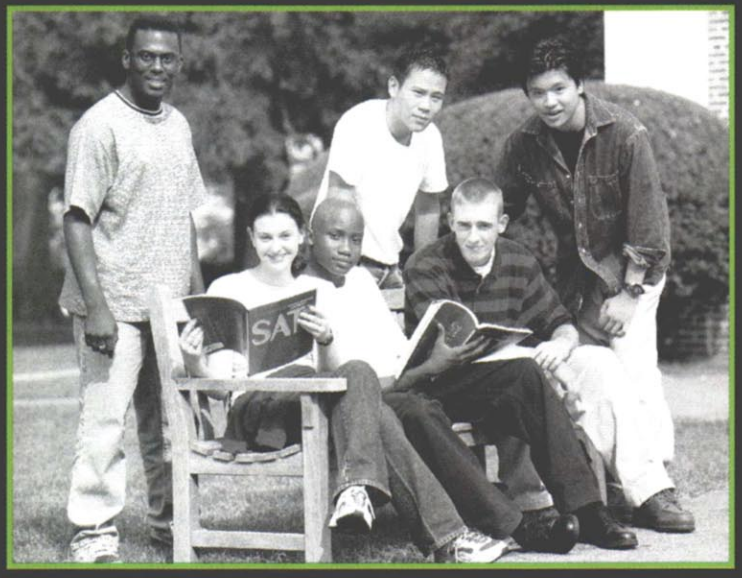
A National Magazine of Politics, Business, and Culture

Fixing Our Immigration Predicament

This is a problem

Essays by
- Samuel Huntington
- Michael Barone
- George Borjas
- Georgie Anne Geyer
- John Fonte
- Steven Camarota
- Tamar Jacoby & others



This is the solution

Volume 11, Number 8

December 2000

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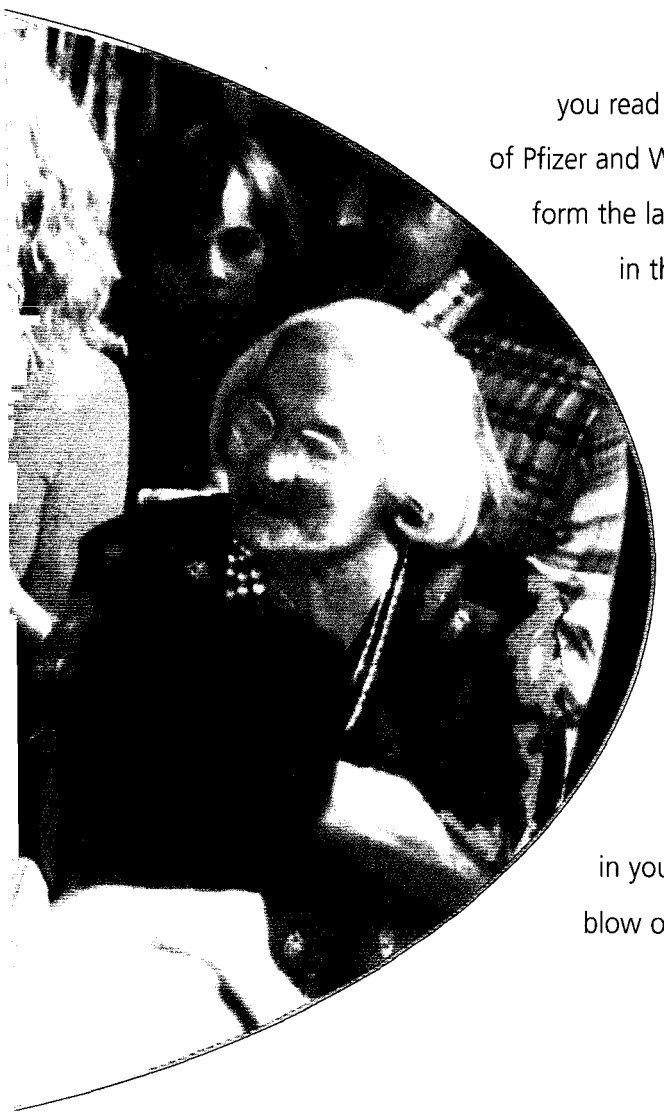

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A National Magazine of Politics, Business, and Culture

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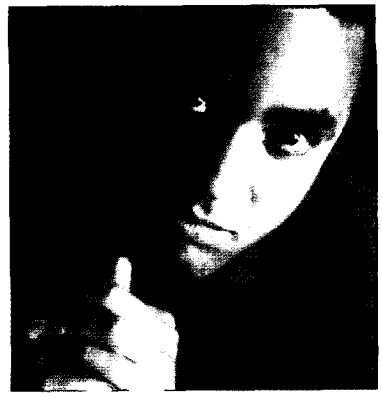

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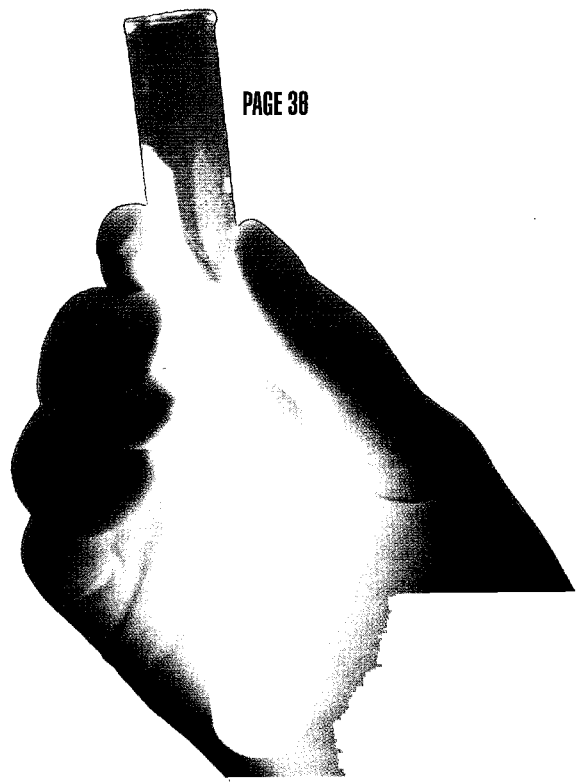

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Bird's Eye

Karl Zinsmeister

Not All Immigrants Are Alike

The last three decades brought a record surge of immigrants to U.S. shores. By the time I die (if current trends continue and my life expectancy is average), immigrants arriving just since 1970 will account (with their descendants) for fully a third of America's population. So the people we are now admitting will, quite literally, determine what our homeland is about to become.

The number of foreign-born in the U.S. has already *tripled* since 1970—to a total of 28 million people, or more than one of every ten current residents. Just-released Census Bureau figures show that an astonishing 40 percent of the people living in New York City today were born in some other land. Add in the children of those immigrants and you find that a *majority* of the local constituents of our two World Series teams this year are rookie Americans.

If the flow of new folk into the U.S. were less heavy, it wouldn't be so vital to keep tabs on who they are. But at current rates of arrival, if our nation wants to define its own destiny we need to take a close interest in who's joining the family, and how they are being integrated in.

The current criteria for who gets to be included are simple (sometimes stupidly so, as we'll see). There are, first of all, the people we offer haven to for charitable reasons: About 15 percent of our legal immigrants are refugees escaping war or poverty, coming from places like Bosnia, Somalia, Cuba, and Sudan. Currently, my wife and I are helping settle a Sudanese family of six in our hometown through a church refugee program. These offerings of sanctuary are part of a long and worthy American tradition, and reasonable numbers of unfortunate families ought to continue to be sheltered each year through our immigration allotments.

Second, there are people we admit for their special skills. These presently account for about 12 percent of our legal immigrants. Our system for defining desirable occupational capabilities is archaic, however, so only about 5 percent of our legal immigrants actually bring valuable technical or professional skills. And if we include illegal immigrants (the vast majority of whom are poorly educated), one finds that only a few percent of tomorrow's new Americans now bring specialized skills with them.

The remainder of America's current immigrants—about three-quarters—get in for one simple reason: They're related to some other immigrant already here. Collecting relatives together is a kindly goal. But should we really be giving out hundreds of thousands of permanent visas every year to foreigners whose sole qualification is that they have, say, a sister in the Bronx? Is this fair to the other millions around the globe who would like a chance at becoming an American? Is it fair to Americans who want to make sure they'll be sharing their country with the best possible co-workers and neighbors?

There are certainly more rational ways to choose the people who will stock our nation. Unfortunately, none of them are as popular with the lobbies pressing the politicians who write our immigration laws. When George W. Bush addressed the League of United Latin American Citizens in June of this year, he promised that if elected President he would make it even easier for foreign-born residents to bring in their relatives. The Clinton-Gore administration, meanwhile, has curried favor with its ethnic supporters by winding down effective border enforcement and rushing citizenship applications—effectively letting fate and a willingness to flout our laws decide who will become the next Americans.

When Congress granted "amnesty" in 1986 to more than 3 million people who had

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entered the U.S. illegally, backers asserted this would end our immigration troubles. In return for wiping the slate clean among previous law-breakers, new efforts were promised to curtail future illegal crossings. Quite clearly, the right combination of better roads, lighting, fences, and high-tech sensors along our borders, plus increased Immigration Service staffing, plus more consistent worker validations and sanctions, could dramatically reduce sneak-entry into the U.S. Little of this was carried out over the last decade, however; so the 1986 reform has been an enormous failure. There are now an estimated 6 million illegal aliens in the United States, and with 300,000-400,000 more entries every year, that number is rising rapidly.

Roughly half of these illegals are Mexicans. Mexicans are also by *far* the largest group among the nearly 1 million *legal* immigrants we absorb annually (thanks to the heavy emphasis on "family unification" in our selection rules, as mentioned above). In the articles on pages 20-25, professor Samuel Huntington and others warn that this unregulated and extraordinarily heavy flow of Mexicans (much heavier than earlier waves of Italians, Irish, or others) poses serious dangers to America. (Some of these arguments were first aired at a conference held this summer in Chicago by the McCormick Tribune Foundation and the Center for Immigration Studies, whose cooperation we would like to acknowledge.) Today's Mexican hyper-migrations are an important and troubling phenomenon that has been glossed over until now.

Lack of control of our borders. Irrational rules for choosing legal immigrants. An over-heavy saturation with poorly educated peasants from Mexico and other Third World countries. The combined effect is that rather than simply importing fresh talent and energy through immigration we are now also importing problems. Unwanted poverty, crime, social dysfunction, educational mediocrity, economic drags, and ethnic division are being stirred unnecessarily into our national stew.

With each successive wave of U.S. immigrants from 1970 through the late 1990s, the education levels, employment rates, tax payments, earnings, and other indicators of success by immigrants have been *falling* relative to natives. (Our stories by Steven Camarota and George Borjas summarize some of the critical new research.) We are, as a result, losing many of the age-old benefits we've long gotten from immigrants.

Fortunately, these serious problems can be remedied with some relatively simple and non-traumatic adjustments. One of the most straightforward would be to change our rules for selecting immigrants. Instead of having three-quarters of our new arrivals be lucky souls entitled to come simply because they are relatives of earlier immigrants, we should seek more candidates who show the highest promise of contributing to America's economy, culture, arts, and sciences. We should find immigrants we know will be self-supporting. We should give preferences to younger workers over those closer to retirement. We should reward people with modern educations, good English skills, and valuable technical abilities.

WE ARE ADMITTING FAR TOO MANY IMMIGRANTS WITHOUT EDUCATION OR SKILLS, AND TOO FEW WITH TOP ABILITIES.

At least half of our immigrants should be picked on these meritocratic grounds. That will still leave hundreds of thousands of slots for relatives, refugees, and others selected for reasons other than individual merit.

You may ask: Is the background of the immigrant really so important? Indeed it is. Berkeley economist Ronald Lee calculates that a 25-year-old with some post-high school education who immigrates to the U.S. will typically pay about $300,000 more in taxes than he receives in government benefits before he dies. (This is hardly a full measure of an immigrant's value to society, but it is a decent rough indicator of whether someone is self-reliant and productive during his or her lifetime.) On the other hand, someone of the same age who arrives without a high school degree (as a third of all current immigrants do) will typically be a net burden on American society over the course of his lifetime. Immigrants who are middle-aged when they arrive, Lee shows, are likewise typically a net drain.

Lee's finding that today's *average* immigrant will be a net drain on the government (under present tax and spending rates, even if his children's tax payments are included) underlines our current immigration problem. The National Academy of Sciences has made a similar finding.

Those average impacts have turned negative because the quality of our immigrants has declined. The benefits to American society continue to be large, however, when talented immigrants are let in. About a fifth of the physicians in the U.S. today are foreign born. Economist Gary Becker estimates that more than a third of the 1 million people now working in Silicon Valley are immigrants. These people are not a drag on U.S. society; they are a great boon. And we could have many more like them if we chose. It is certainly not the case that every computer engineer is valuable and every unskilled laborer undesirable. The key is to have an appropriate mix, and today we are admitting far too many immigrants without education or skills, and too few with top abilities.

We are also having some problems today linked to sheer numbers overload. Digesting upwards of 1.3 million new arrivals (legal and illegal), year after year, is an awful lot to ask. Many moderate observers are now suggesting we'd find it easier to successfully absorb our existing bulge of immigrants if there were a partial reduction of the in-flow for a period of years. One *can* get too much of a good thing, even immigration admirers are concluding.

It's important to realize today's immigration levels are mostly unintended. As recently as the 1970s, our immigration numbers were *half* of today's levels. What opened our floodgates in the 1980s and '90s was the 1965 repeal of immigration quotas. That act passed Congress only after proponents assured the nation it wouldn't change in-flows from the existing level of about 300,000 persons per year. Democratic Senator Eugene McCarthy said the plan was a "limited measure" that would "not make any substantial increase in the number of immigrants who can enter each year." New York Senator Bobby Kennedy promised there

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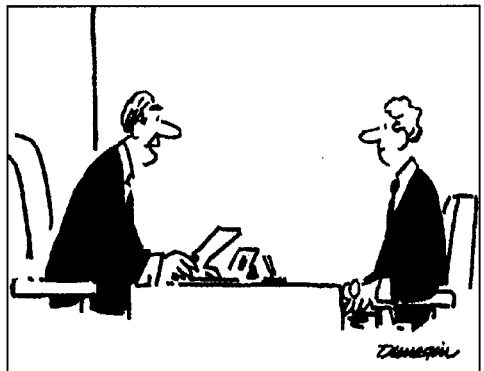
Sidelights

President Clinton "revels in the stock-market rise during his tenure," notes columnist **James Glassman**, "yet for the period when he governed with a Democratic Congress, the Dow rose only 600 points." Studies at the Annenberg School for Communication, reports Dean **Kathleen Hall Jamieson**, show that in general elections from 1952-96, attack ads were "more accurate than those touting the virtues and record of a candidate." ··· A study of the presidential primaries this year found that "negative" ads draw voters to the polls. ··· The *Washington Post* editorial page goes negative on the Vice President: "In lashing out against big oil, big pharmaceutical firms, and big health maintenance organizations, Mr. **Gore** is playing the demagogue, and he himself must know it." The Harvard Program on Education Policy and Governance studied school voucher programs in Dayton, Ohio; Washington, D.C.; and New York City. It found black students who switched from public to private schools improved their reading and math scores dramatically in both the first and second years. The voucher programs closed the black/white test score gap by one-third in those first two years, a much larger improvement than was produced by programs elsewhere which either reduced class sizes or implemented rigorous statewide tests. ··· Parents with children in grades K-12 of Chicago's public schools will receive report cards rating them in such areas as their children's bed times and whether the parents attend school events. For parents who regard their children as "fashion accessories," Italian designers now offer $600 dresses and $500 silk pants. **Jeff Bezos** of Amazon.com shocked a recent American Booksellers Association meeting by predicting that, a decade hence, only 15 percent of sales will occur online: "The physical world is still the best medium ever invented."

Just days before his latest TV special was to air, **Geraldo Rivera** announced he *might* run for mayor of New York. "Gee," sneers *Washington Post* TV critic **Lisa de Moraes**, "do you think his 'stunning' announcement might have been a mere publicity stunt to try to goose ratings on this latest incarnation in his series of NBC prime-time ratings losers?" It didn't work: Geraldo's special "was whipped by 'Flipper.' That's gotta hurt." Two University of Maryland economists studied 37 cities with professional sports teams between 1969-96 and found that the negative economic effects of a team coming to town always outweighed the positive. In China, the *Times* of London recently reported, a woman who gave birth to a fourth child in violation of that country's "One Child" policy had her healthy baby forcibly taken from her and drowned in a rice paddy before her eyes. ··· The House of Representatives approved by 380 to 15 the Born Alive Infant Protection Act, which would require that children who survive abortion attempts receive appropriate medical care after birth and not be put to death. ··· "Nearly half of households earning between $250,000 and $499,999," the *Wall Street Journal* writes, "had just one breadwinner in 1998, up from about 38 percent six years earlier. For households earning $500,000 to $999,999 the figure was 58 percent. Having an at-home spouse "says something about what you've achieved," one "adviser to wealthy families" told the paper. If your child is kidnapped, the IRS only allows a tax deduction for him the year he's abducted; ransom, however, is always deductible. U.S. District Judge **Robert Cleland**, outraged by "one of the most unjustifiable lawsuits" he'd ever seen, ordered the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to pay over $58,000 to a Burger King owner it had sued for supposedly discriminating against blacks. The *Christian Science Monitor* observes a strong trend among churches to minister to single parents, both spiritually and practically. "If you are going to be anti-abortion," the paper quotes a Southern Baptist spokesman saying, "then you absolutely must…provide support for women who are alone, in need, and have been duped by men and by the law." ··· The Urban Institute studied 1998 tax returns and found that the state with the least charitable giving was Massachusetts. Mississippi, however, though forty-ninth in the nation in average income, boasted the country's most generous citizens, followed by other southern Bible Belt states, the Dakotas, and heavily Mormon Utah. The National Rifle Association's membership has rocketed to over 4 million, an all-time high. The previous record, 3.1 million, occurred in 1994, the same year Republicans swept the House of Representatives. ··· A *Washington Post* reporter who was writing on Marine Corps training asked the weapon safety officer for a cigarette light—while standing in an ammo shed.

—*SW*



"I've been looking over your genetic code, Stockard, and I like what I see!"

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SCAN

DON'T WRITE OFF THE NEXT GENERATION

In *Millennials Rising: The Next Generation*, Neil Howe and William Strauss predict the generation of young Americans due to start hitting college campuses soon will have little patience for the politics of baby boomer faculty members, and will rebel against university policies they see as promoting racial, sexual, and ideological separatism.

The authors suggest the "Millennial Generation," beginning with this year's college freshmen, is "team-oriented, optimistic, and...poised for greatness on a global scale." Just as students at the end of the 1960s were starkly different from their mild-mannered counterparts in that decade's early years, so students raised today amid coarseness and cynicism may just rebel themselves into decency, self-restraint, and public-spiritedness.

If that sounds unlikely, consider data showing that homicide, violent crime, abortion, and teen pregnancy are plummeting at some of the fastest rates ever recorded, while teen suicide is falling for the first time in decades. (See the *TAE* issues on "Generation X," January/February 1998, and "Is America Turning a Corner?" January/February 1999.)

Baby boomers and those immediately following them were interested in personal liberation, says author Howe, and that's what Millennials "are rebelling against. "It was like reality hit...and people realized society was on a downward spiral," freshman Alexandra Kagan explained to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Asked "What is the major cause of the problems in this country?" today's teens cite "selfishness" first of all.

Five or six years ago, college kids "were real angry," one college administrator told the *Chronicle*. "There was an overwhelming sense of entitlement. It was always, 'I pay your salary, and you should do what I say. Screw your rules.'" Such attitudes are "slowly starting to change." When students screw up, they're "more likely to take responsibility for their actions," and when tragedy strikes them, they "tend to be more resilient" and seem, "on the whole, happier."

Howe and Strauss foresee some chance that Millennials, who love rules and trust institutions, "could be led astray by a demagogue, or use technology in Orwellian ways." But in today's cultural climate, we'll happily risk those trade-offs.

HOME ON THE RANGE

Nevada house builder Ignatius Piazza has put up a new 177-home development near Pahrump, Nevada, with some highly unusual amenities: 13 shooting ranges and 400 yards of shooting trenches. Oh yes, and free gun cleaning for every resident.

Piazza has named the community Front Sight (much more interesting, we think, than the usual monikers—The Oaks at Trickling Brook, etc.).

"Wouldn't it be nice to live in the safest town in America?" Piazza asked a crowd at a recent rally. "We won't have any crime at Front Sight, not with everyone trained in firearms, and most everyone owning them."

A 1 PERCENT PICTURE

In the last election, the "wealthiest 1 percent" of Americans were frequently invoked in sinister tones. But they were hardly ever described. Are they partying Kennedy kids, chauffered oil barons, retired rock stars?

Hardly. For 1998 (the latest year data is available), the top 1 percent:

- paid about 35 percent of all personal income taxes, up from 29 percent in 1993 (the entire bottom 50 percent of taxpayers paid a mere 4 percent of income tax receipts),
- had adjusted gross incomes beginning not in the millions but at $269,496.

Another survey of the top 1 percent (focusing especially on technology workers) found:

- nine out of ten did *not* inherit their wealth,
- they've been working 29 years on average, and still work 56 hours a week,
- 83 percent volunteer time for charities, and on average give away 8 percent of their income.

Sorry, Al, they don't scare us.

DID SOMEONE SAY DIALOGUE?

From the newsletter published by iconoclastic black commentator Larry Elder:

Harvard's African-American Studies department chairman, Henry Louis Gates, once complained that because of white racism, "when I walk into a room, people still see my blackness, more than my Gates-ness, or my literaryness."

Then there's Karen Russell, the Harvard Law grad and daughter of former basketball great Bill Russell. "I am angry.... How am I supposed to react to well-meaning, good liberal white people

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who say things like…'You're one of my good friends, and I never think of you as black.' Implicit in such a remark is 'I think of you as white' or perhaps just 'I don't think of your race at all.'"

See, Gates is angry because people see black. And Russell is angry because they don't. Don't try to understand; it's a "black thing."

HEIGHTS OF FOLLY

A Pennsylvania farmer hit the jackpot for $300,000 after he put his ladder on top of a pile of frozen horse manure, reports *The Cato Review of Business & Government.* When the manure thawed, the ladder slipped, and the man sued. The target of the lawsuit? Not the Weather Channel. And not the horse (no deep pockets there). Instead, the farmer and his lawyers bamboozled a jury into finding the ladder manufacturer guilty because it failed to warn him his accident could occur.

At my local hardware store last week, I saw some of the fallout from these manure-type episodes when I picked up a new ladder, the regular wooden type. In addition to a "Danger: Not a step" sticker that warned me not to sit or stand on the flimsy little platform that's intended for the paint, and another sticker on the fifth step that warned "Do not stand at or above this level," the ladder's more far-reaching "Caution" sticker listed no fewer than 21 other ways I could fall into a pile of unfrozen manure or, out here where it's illegal to have a horse, plunge headlong onto my living room rug.

First, there's a warning that might have prevented the entire manure misfortune: "If used on slippery surfaces, be careful." In addition, there are eight other paternalistic warnings that just might keep the next farmer out of the soup: (1) Wear slip-resistant shoes, (2) Set all four feet on firm level surfaces, (3) Keep body centered between side rails, (4) Use extreme caution when getting off or on, (5) Check that all feet are firmly supported, (6) Never walk, bounce, or move ladder while on it, (7) Always face ladder and maintain a firm grip, and (8) Do not overreach. You may lose your balance and/or tip ladder. For good measure, the manufacturer also suggests calling over your wife or one of the kids: When possible, have someone hold the ladder.

Additional proper care warnings say I should "Tighten nuts" and "Never paint a wood ladder" and promptly "Destroy the ladder if it is exposed to excessive heat." Another warning says it's not too smart to do things like cleaning the gutters during a typhoon: "Windy conditions require extra caution." (A guy in Chicago sued the rope company, the ladder maker, and the flag manufacturer after he was hoisted 12 feet into the air while trying to raise Old Glory during a wind storm.)

There's a special warning, too, for those of us who paint on hillsides and stick red bricks under one leg: "Never place anything under or attach anything to ladder to gain height or to adjust to uneven surfaces." And a warning about wives who burst through the door to show us what they've just bought: "Do not use ladder in front of unlocked doors." And a caution for those of us who like doing things in pairs: "Ladder is designed to support the weight of one person." And a warning for those of us who spend more time on a barstool than on a treadmill: "Never use ladder if you are not in good physical condition."

Finally, there's a large sticker on both sides of the ladder saying we better wise up about all the other stickers: "Failure to read and follow instructions on this ladder may result in injuries or death."

The price of this mindset that rewards people for their own missteps by emptying other people's wallets? Measured in higher consumer prices, an estimated $3,500 per year for the average family.

But there's the deeper corrosion of a loss of individual responsibility. In addition to demonstrating our growing bondage to fractious lawyers, warning labels like these suggest we're increasingly becoming an infantilized citizenry.

—**Ralph Reiland** *is a* TAE *contributing writer.*

PLEASE WRITE

We welcome comments of all sorts in letters to the editor. Send to "The Mail," The American Enterprise, 1150 Seventeenth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Or fax to (202) 862-5867. Or e-mail to TheAmericanEnterprise@compuserve.com. Include your address for verification. All letters receive our careful consideration. Published letters may be edited for length and clarity.

We look forward to hearing from you.

YES, COMRADE!

Following are excerpts from a list of "Class Ground Rules" given by an American University sociology professor to her students. They are adapted from rules being promulgated nationally by Tennessee women's studies instructor Lynn Weber Cannon. The introduction explains that "all students must commit themselves to the final set of group rules," which are used to guide all class discussions.

• We will assume that all of us (regardless of racial identity, sex, class, cultural background) have been influenced by the racism of our culture.

• Acknowledge that oppression (i.e., racism, sexism, classism, ageism) exists.

• Acknowledge that one of the mechanisms of oppression is that we are all taught misinformation about gender, race, and class. This is true for both dominant

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and subordinate group members.

• We cannot be blamed for the misinformation we have learned, but we will be held responsible for repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise.

ANOTHER MEDIA MURDER OF THE TRUTH

It was a shocking allegation, sure to come up in the presidential debates. On the very day of the first debate, the *Los Angeles Times* published two front-page stories about hundreds of criminals obtaining concealed-handgun permits in Texas and committing violent crimes. With subheads like "Many Licensees Were Obviously Unfit" and "Most Problems Occur After Permits Issued," Governor Bush had clearly created a program that endangered Texans' lives. And he had been negligent: The problems appear never to have been fixed. No wonder Vice President Al Gore tried to squeeze this news story into the second debate as he claimed "too many criminals are getting guns."

The terrifying story, however, is full of untruths and omissions.

Of hundreds of thousands of gun permit holders in Texas, only 71, not the 400 claimed, had disqualifying criminal backgrounds. These mistakenly issued permits occurred when the program was first instituted in 1996, and most of them arose because of delays in fingerprint checks by the FBI. More importantly, these 71 permits were revoked, and none of these persons committed a crime while he had the permit. The Texas Department of Public Safety says it told the *Los Angeles Times* reporters before the story was published that they were improperly including more cases than they should, but not only did the reporters not fix the problem, their story doesn't even acknowledge that others might disagree with their numbers.

The *Times* told a few sensational stories of permit holders who committed crimes, but never bothered to mention the fundamental reality that permit holders are extremely law-abiding. By any measure, rates of crime among permit holders are quite low: Adult Texans with gun permits are only one-eighth as likely to be arrested as those without permits, and only one-sixteenth as likely to be convicted of a crime. (Asked by *TAE* about these stark numbers, *Times* reporter William Rempel shrugged them off: "Could be.")

Most of the few violations committed by permit holders are minor offenses. As the *National Journal* has observed, permit holders "turn out to be…safer even than off-duty cops."

The *Times* also repeats Al Gore's emotional charge that Bush signed a law allowing people to carry concealed handguns in churches. This claim is utterly false. It has never been legal to carry concealed handguns in Texas churches.

The most important public policy question on concealed-carry laws is whether they save or cost lives on net. Yet this crucial issue was entirely ignored by the *Times*. If the paper had really cared about people's safety, it would have reported that *not a single* national academic study shows an increase in violent crime stemming from concealed handgun laws. Instead, there is overwhelming evidence that laws like the one Bush fought for have made life safer in every one of the nearly 30 states that have passed them.

Though it was ignored by the *Times*, the record in Texas is unambiguous: During the first two years the law was in effect, Texas's murder rate fell by 25 percent—much faster than the 16 percent average decline for states without right-to-carry laws. A similar comparison shows that Texas's rape rate fell twice as fast. All of which explains why, to the *Times*' puzzlement, over 60 percent of Texans support the law.

—**John Lott Jr.** *is a senior research scholar at the Yale Law School and author of* More Guns, Less Crime.

DEMOCRAT'S LAMENT

Richard Lamm, the Democratic governor of Colorado from 1975-87, wrote sadly just weeks before the election:

"The teachers' unions and the trial lawyers have taken over the Democratic Party and prevent much-needed reform from occurring. We are fast becoming a party of rich lawyers and poor teachers."

THE PARTY OF FEAR

Facing the tightest national election since 1960, Democrats rolled out the race card hoping to boost black turnout.

Asked about racial profiling at the vice presidential debate, Senator Joseph Lieberman replied that a black presidential advisor was "surrounded by police for no other cause that anyone can determine than the color of his skin." In fact, on September 6, cops stopped White House aide Bob Nash and his wife in their blue Infiniti 43 minutes after a black Infiniti was reported carjacked nearby. Authorities sought a vehicle with temporary license plates—as Nash's had. "The only thing that was ever profiled in this incident was the car," Montgomery County, Maryland police captain William O'Toole told the Associated Press. Nine days later, Lieberman ignored these details.

In a senatorial debate against New York Republican Rick Lazio, Hillary Clinton said she would oppose Supreme Court nominees "who would vote to overturn *Brown v. Board of Education*." Huh? Mrs. Clinton surely understands that this 1954 school desegregation decision is accepted by Americans from Jesse Jackson to Jesse Helms. This civil rights landmark will be

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overturned the day the Empire State Building capsizes. So her remark seemed designed to fabricate racial jitters.

Meanwhile, amid high oil prices and missing nuclear secrets, the Energy Department decided on October 9 that it could best use its resources by launching an internal racial-profiling probe. The same day, Democratic Party chairman Joe Andrew announced plans to have Lieberman exploit the truck-dragging death of James Byrd, a black man murdered by white racists in 1998. Andrew told reporters, "we're going back to Jasper, Texas, and talk about hate crimes."

Back in the 1998 elections, Democrats likewise amplified their racial rhetoric. "When you don't vote, you allow another cross to burn," warned one commercial on black radio stations in Missouri.

Today's ugly racial appeals are part of a wider ruthlessness among Democratic campaigners. Last July, Gore-Lieberman campaign manager Donna Brazile nicknamed her Nashville headquarters "the slaughterhouse," saying her staff "may look like gentle people. But they are killers."

When Democrats attack the GOP with meat axes, Republicans usually defend themselves with oyster forks. The Republican National Committee did deploy some new weapons this fall, however, namely four radio spots aimed at urban black voters. The ads promoted tax cuts, entrepreneurship, school choice, and pension reform.

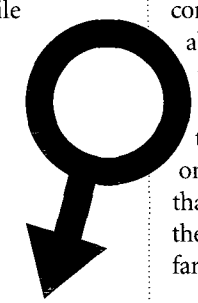
In short, black voters were offered two clear options: hope from the Republicans, and, from the Democrats, fear itself.

—**Deroy Murdock** *is a nationally syndicated columnist.*

SAVE THE MALES

Perhaps men aren't a "privileged" group after all. At their latest annual meeting, college admissions directors held panels worrying over the declining presence of males on campus.

"I call this the issue that dare not speak its name," says Harry Dawe of Oberlin College. Men now make up less than 45 percent of U.S. college undergraduates, down from about 57 percent in 1970, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* notes. In 1997, the latest year for which statistics are available, 131,900 more women than men earned bachelor's degrees. What accounts for the fall-off? Discrimination? A "hostile environment"? Harassment? A lack of societal support? Institutional sexism?



Maybe the problem is just old-fashioned bias. Robert J. Massa, who handles enrollment at Dickinson College, suggests the preferences colleges have recently given women "have not been re-evaluated as the need for them may have evaporated. For example, aid to women at Dickinson has historically exceeded aid to men by 8 percent, even though men… score higher on the SAT" and are just as needy financially as their female peers.

One solution would be to once again let simple academic merit be the guide for college admission. But we won't be surprised if administrators instead dream up some new affirmative action program. Maybe something for students who are male but promise not to be masculine.

THE RIGHT TO SLEEP AROUND

The Contender's cinematic pardon of Bill Clinton's Oval Office infidelities performs so many painful back flips trying to prove its point that you'll feel like putting a heating pad on your own spine after watching it. The movie argues for the privacy rights of those in public office, but in doing so it completely dismisses such virtues as responsibility and character.

Hollywood's minions in the press have been dutifully praising Joan Allen for her performance as Democratic Senator Laine Hanson, who becomes the vice presidential designate after the death of the sitting Veep. As her confirmation hearings get underway, word leaks out about a sorority sex party Hanson supposedly took part in when she was a freshman in college. Soon the battle lines are drawn: Laine staunchly refuses to discuss her personal life because it's irrelevant to the political process, while Republican Congressman Shelly Runyon, played by Gary Oldman, brutally questions whether she's morally fit for high office.

There's no denying *The Contender* raises pertinent questions about a politician's right to privacy. The movie's one true moment occurs when the ex-wife of Laine's husband is subpoenaed by the confirmation committee. Forced to testify about an affair between Laine and her then-husband, which eventually broke up her marriage, the poor woman has to relive her embarrassment and pain on national TV. The innocent casualties that come with dragging private lives into the public light raise the question of how far we should go for certain information.

Unfortunately, *The Contender* offers no help with that decision because of its single-minded zealousness in defending Laine and her past. There's not a moment of subtlety in the entire film. In case we haven't figured out that Laine is supposed to be a martyr, for instance, writer-director Rod Lurie helpfully frames her in a shot standing amidst endless headstones in a military cemetery.

Even more egregious is Oldman's Shelly Runyon, a hissing villain who's described by his own wife as a "second-rate Joe McCarthy" and is treated by the movie like a sixth-rate one. There's even a throwaway line uttered by Runyon while he's playing basketball in a gym that hints the congressman may be racist.

Oldman and his manager Douglas Urbanski told *Premiere* that DreamWorks Pictures, the studio run by Steven Spielberg, David Geffen, and Jeffrey Katzenberg (all lavish contributors to Bill Clinton and the Democratic Party) forced editing cuts on Rod Lurie that twisted *The Contender* into a "piece of propaganda" worthy of the Nazis, especially since it was released just before the election. A DreamWorks spokesman demurs: "There's no indication to me whatsoever that Rod [Lurie]

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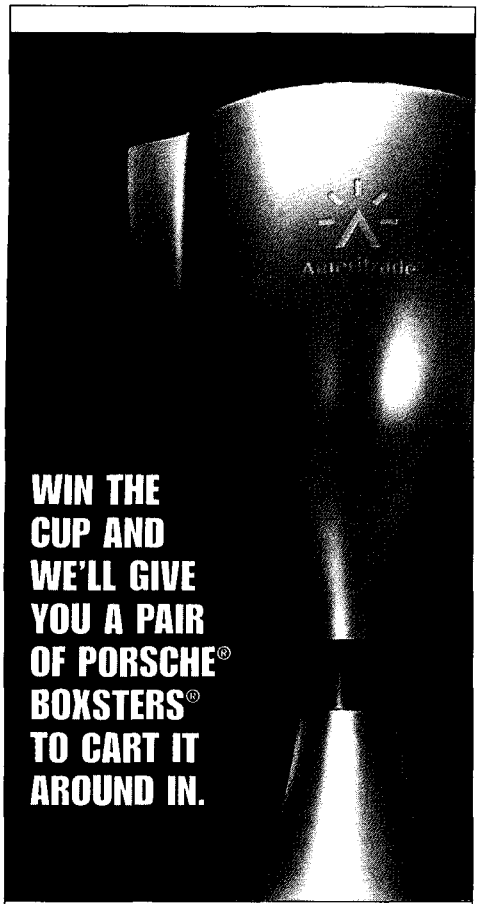

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ever felt pressured," he told reporters. "The owners of this company have sympathies with the Democratic Party. Did those sympathies enter into the editorial process or the decision to buy the movie? Unequivocally, no." But even the liberal *Washington Post* disagrees, saying the movie "succumbs to heavy-handed politicizing."

The Contender, in short, is artless agitprop. But with a surprise revelation near the end, the movie even fails to follow through on its own convictions. Up to that point, the filmmakers take the position that whatever Laine did in her past doesn't have a bearing on her present; then in a final conversation with the President (Jeff Bridges), we learn she actually had left the college party before the sordid stuff began. She chose not to disclose this fact before the committee because she sees it as "nobody's business." *The Contender* thinks it's giving us a Senator Laine Hanson we can feel good about, but doing so is an intrinsic admission that moral responsibility does matter in a representative.

A few critics have placed *The Contender* alongside 1939's *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, in which James Stewart plays an idealistic young senator up against a corrupt political opponent. "This is no place for you," a cynical aide tells Stewart's senator upon his arrival in Washington, "you're halfway decent." In comparison, *The Contender* says that being halfway decent is more than enough. Welcome to inspirational political cinema at the end of the Clinton era, in which we celebrate not virtue but a politician's right to sleep around.

—TAE *contributing writer* **Josh Larsen** *reviews films from Chicago.*

***BIRD'S EYE**, continued from page 5*

would be only a temporary increase of about 5,000 new immigrants per year. In reality, the result was an explosion to three or four *times* the earlier flow.

Especially in places like southern California, one of our biggest problems today is simply that the number of immigrants has climbed too high for assimilating institutions (like the L.A. schools, many of which are now effectively Mexican rather than American schools) to process them effectively. Students of immigration like Harvard's George Borjas note that our nation's earlier eras of heavy immigration "were followed by decades of rest, during which time the immigrant waves were assimilated and incorporated into the American mainstream." As economist Robert Samuelson has written, "America has a huge social and economic capacity to absorb newcomers, but that capacity is not unlimited."

Effectively absorbing immigrants so that both they and the nation are strengthened ought to be the goal of our immigration policy. But it must be noted that since our national crisis of confidence in the 1960s, America has not been very assertive about assimilating fresh arrivals. As noted in our lead story featuring John Fonte and Michael Barone, we've not done much over the last generation to make new Americans proficient in our language, our laws, or our institutions of citizenship. Instead of encouraging "Americanization," our liberal elites have fostered "multiculturalism," bilingualism, and a politics of ethnic grievance. The Ford Foundation, for instance, has funded Mexican activist groups (like MALDEF) rather than encouraging assimilated citizenship.

Defenders of healthy immigration to the U.S. (and we include ourselves in this group) need to bear in mind that there is a trade off between immigration policy and assimilation policy. If we uphold standards of citizenship and energetically acclimatize new arrivals, extensive immigration can be quite manageable. But if we fail at Americanization, then immigration flows as heavy as our current ones will create serious economic troubles, ugly social flashes, and political backlash.

Sensible controls on immigration and unapologetic measures to aid assimilation are thus necessary to a successful pluralistic America. We need reform in both areas right now.

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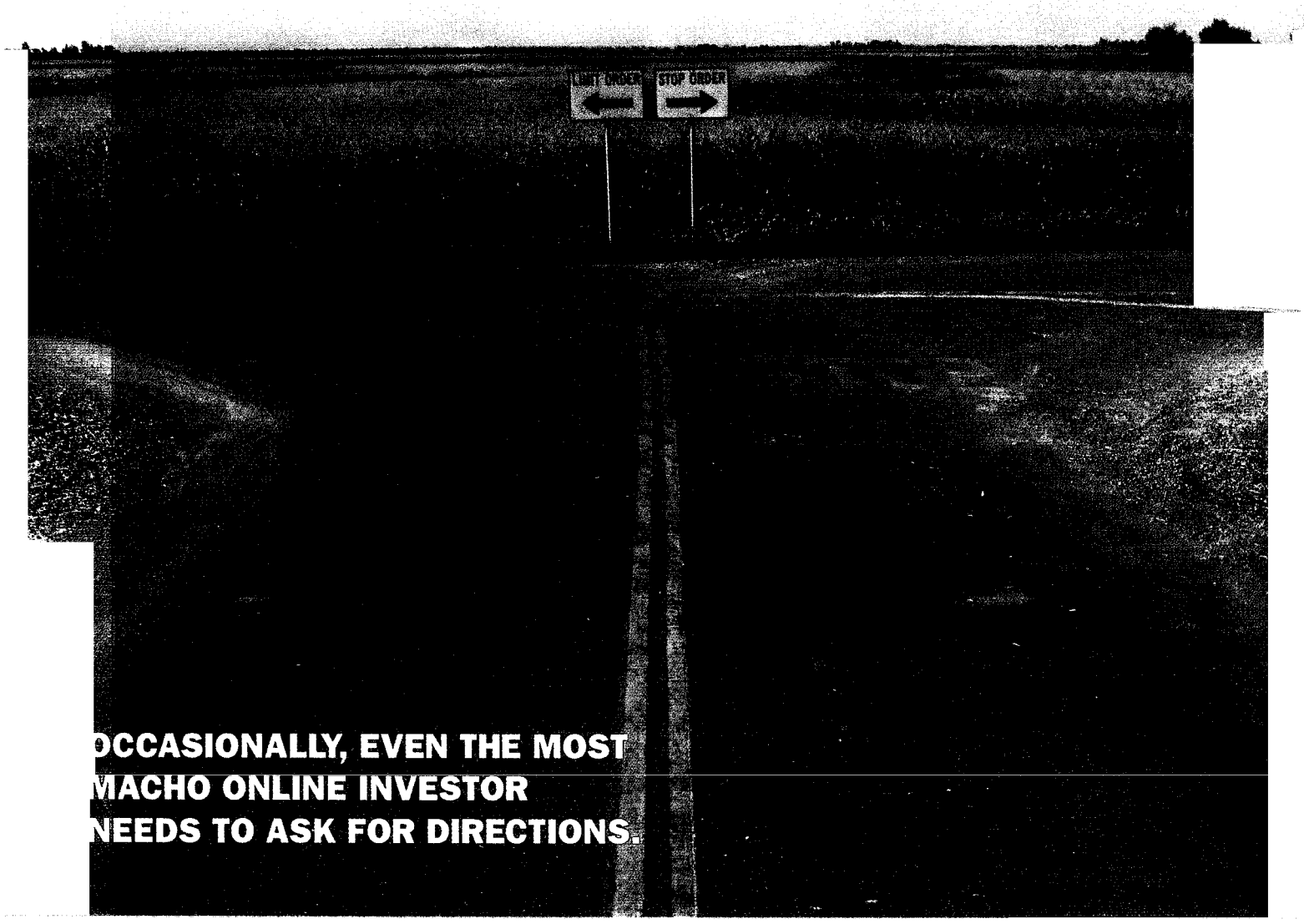

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Does America Have An

Michael Barone says NO

Our Immigrants Always Melted Before

Heavy immigration has been the rule in American history, not the exception, and the minority groups of 2000 in many ways resemble the major immigrant groups of 1900: Blacks resemble Irish, Latinos resemble Italians, Asians resemble Jews. We are not in a wholly new place in history.

Consider the Irish. In the 1840s, the potato famine hit Ireland, and nearly 700,000 Irish came to America. One million arrived in the 1850s, 2.4 million more between 1860 and 1914.

The Irish were the first immigrants to throng to the cities, and the Catholic Church was the dominant institution for most of them. The "wild Irish" had high rates of crime and alcoholism—even while their love of hierarchy and affinity for the state also meant that many became cops. They also produced many entertainers and athletes, and continued for many years after the 1840s to be physically distinctive. Discrimination against them continued until well into this century.

Irish distinctiveness was greatest in politics. Up through 1960, the differences in voting behavior between Yankee Protestants and Irish Catholics in the Northeast were as stark as the differences between blacks and whites in Mississippi today. Today the particularities of Irish-Americans are mostly past. In the 1950s, they surpassed U.S. average levels in income and education. Then in 1960 JFK became the first Irish-American President. Intermarriage with non-Irish became common, and with the advent of the birth control pill large Catholic families mostly disappeared. The Irish became woven into the fabric of American life. It took 120 years.

People of African descent have lived in America since the first slaves landed at Jamestown in 1619, but the great migration of blacks within America didn't come until the middle of the twentieth century. During 1940-65, about 5 million African Americans poured into cities above the Mason-Dixon line. They brought to the North a faith that only strong action by the federal government could overcome the discrimination they suffered.

Southern blacks had limited chances to own businesses, and in the North blacks showed little entrepreneurial drive. Even today, relatively few businesses in black areas are owned by blacks, and black incomes remain well below average. But blacks moved upward in political machines, labor unions, and the civil service. Blacks also became great athletes, musicians, and entertainers.

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Michael Barone is a columnist for U.S. News & World Report *and a frequent contributor to* The American Enterprise.

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Assimilation Problem?

John Fonte says YES

It's Not 1900 Any More

At any conference on immigration these days, someone will typically rise and quote Henry James, Henry Adams, Henry Cabot Lodge, or some other old Anglo-Saxon fuddy-duddy worrying circa 1900 that immigrants would never assimilate to American life. The speaker will then ridicule the designated Henry, remind us he was wrong, and declare, "We have been through this debate before, but today's immigrants will Americanize just as they did in the past."

This is good sport, guaranteed to get a few laughs. But it is grossly misleading. For the fact is, today's assimilating forces are much different than those that prevailed in the early twentieth century. To put things simply: It's not 1900 anymore.

During our earlier immigration wave one century back, we had self-confident patriotic elites in politics, education, business, religion, and civic associations who insisted that new immigrants Americanize. Now, we have diffident and divided elites who are either actively promoting anti-Americanization policies such as "multiculturalism" or doing little to encourage assimilation. In 1915, Democrat Woodrow Wilson and Republican Theodore Roosevelt explicitly and forcefully called for the "Americanization" of new immigrants. In 2000, Democrats and Republicans alike talk mostly of "diversity," rarely if ever of "assimilation" or "Americanization."

Back then, the federal government promoted Americanism and individual rights. Now it promotes ethnic consciousness and group rights. Group preferences in employment that were originally designed for black Americans who had suffered historical discrimination now include special treatment for most newly arrived immigrants from Latin America and Asia, and for non-citizens as well as citizens.

Back then, the United States had control of its borders. Now the Immigration and Naturalization Service estimates that every year the number of illegal immigrants grows by 275,000.

Back then no foreign government (not Italy, not the Austro-Hungarian empire) was on our border, or anywhere else, promoting bilingualism, biculturalism, and dual nationality. Now the Mexican government openly undermines the patriotic assimilation of our new citizens. Mexico is promoting dual nationality for American children of Mexican ancestry, and in many schools in the Southwest, American students of Latino descent are taught by Mexicans and Mexican-trained teachers and use Mexican textbooks. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that some American

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John Fonte is senior fellow at the Hudson Institute.

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We are not in a wholly new place. The immigrant groups of 2000 in many ways resemble the groups of 1900.

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Like the Irish, the blacks who migrated to Northern cities had unusually high rates of crime, alcoholism, and drug use. They produced urban riots of a kind the nation had not seen since the Irish protested against the draft in New York in 1863. Between 1965 and 1975, crime tripled in America, with about half of all offenses committed by blacks. In the same years, welfare rolls tripled, and about half of those on welfare were black. These two trends devastated many black inner-city neighborhoods.

In the 1940s blacks were still only 3 percent of the electorate, since most of those living in the South were barred from the polls. In the 1950s the parties competed for black votes; pioneering black politician Adam Clayton Powell supported Eisenhower in 1956, and only 65 percent of blacks voted for Kennedy in 1960.

Then, in 1964, blacks became as heavily Democratic as the Irish had been in the 1850s, largely because of Kennedy's support for the Civil Rights Act and Barry Goldwater's vote against it. Most of the growing number of black officials enthusiastically favored expanding government. But black progress in incomes, education, and jobs began in World War II, and continued through the 1950s and '60s without big government programs.

Today the black middle class is burgeoning, and black families that have two-parents are earning incomes equivalent to those of intact white families with similar levels of education. Since around 1993, crime and welfare dependency have been decreasing as quickly as they rose in the awful decade of 1965-75. Still, the majority of black children are raised in homes without a father present today.

All this is evidence that the habits of mind blacks brought from the rural South are gradually changing. There is reason to hope it won't take American blacks—whose mass migration began 60 years ago—as long to be fully assimilated into American society as the 120 years it took the Irish.

Italian immigration to America also came in a rush. Only 70,000 Italians arrived before 1880, but they were followed by 807,000 in the next two decades and by 3 million from 1900 to 1914. Nearly 80 percent came from southern Italy, where powerful barons, ineffective bureaucracies, and organized crime thrived, and the economy remained stagnant even as northern Italy industrialized.

Most Italian immigrants settled in or near New York City; today almost half of Italian-Americans still live within 100 miles of Manhattan. They lived in "Little Italies," with different streets dominated by immigrants from particular provinces. These "urban villagers" worked mostly as manual laborers, often in construction or on the docks; some worked as barbers, shoemakers, stonemasons, shopkeepers. Many found work from a *padrone*, a labor contractor who charged a fee for setting them up at job sites.

Italian immigrants didn't trust major American institutions any more than they had those in southern Italy, including the Irish-dominated Catholic Church. Nor did they trust schools. Dropout rates were high, and an Italian proverb ran, "Stupid is he who makes his children better than himself."

Nor did Italian immigrants enter quickly into politics. The Yankee-dominated Republicans and Irish-dominated Democrats had little appeal.

Yet in time, Italian-Americans began to assimilate. By the late 1930s, when sociologist William Whyte observed gangs in the Italian North End of Boston, he distinguished between "corner boys" and "college boys": those who hung out on the street versus those who concentrated on school work in hopes of upward mobility.

World War II played a critical part in Italian-Americans' rise. Hundreds of thousands of Italians served in America's multiethnic military. When they returned, many took advantage of the G.I. Bill; college attendance among Italians rose from 15 percent in 1940 to 38 percent in 1960. They climbed the occupational ladder, earned higher-than-average incomes, and fanned out from Little Italy to the suburbs. They also became more involved in the Catholic Church and voted for Kennedy in 1960 at even higher rates than Irish-Americans.

By the 1970s Italians were thoroughly absorbed into American life. It took 100 years.

Immigration from Latin America was negligible for most of U.S. history. The Mexican revolution and its aftermath sparked a rush of 700,000 arrivals from south of the border between 1910 and 1930. Then over 800,000 Cubans fled Fidel Castro's regime from 1959-96.

Since the late 1960s, Latino immigration has increased on a steady curve, with spikes upward from countries with political disturbances. Immigration from Latin America totaled 1.1 million from 1961-70, 1.7 million from 1971-80, 3 million from 1981-90, and 2.7 million in just the six years from 1991 to 1996. The increase from Mexico has been even steeper, nearly quadrupling from the '60s to the '90s and still rising. Overall, measured Latino immigration was 8.5 million between 1961 and 1996. By 1998 there were an estimated 30 million Latinos in the U.S., including several million illegals.

Like the Italians, Latinos have moved mostly to a few large metropolitan areas. The overwhelming majority of Dominicans and Puerto Ricans headed to New York City. The overwhelming majority of Cubans went to Miami or Hudson County, New Jersey. The large majority of Mexican-origin Latinos ended up in Los Angeles, Houston, Chicago, and New York. In 1998, Latinos composed 31 percent of the total population in California, 30 percent in Texas, 15 percent in Florida, 14 percent in New York, 12 percent in New Jersey, and 10 percent in Illinois.

What America's Latinos do more than anything else is work. The work force participation rate of Hispanic males is 80 percent, above any other measured group. The flow has largely been into private sector jobs, and more into small than large firms, with little movement toward unionization. In 1994, Hispanic income per person was only 57 percent of the national average, but Hispanic *household* income was 73 percent of the U.S. average, thanks to multiple workers and multiple jobs.

Latinos work, most of all, for their families. A larger percentage of Latinos than of native-born whites live in father-mother-children families; the divorce rate among Latinos is significantly

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A century ago we insisted that immigrants Americanize. Now, we promote "multiculturalism," and do little to encourage assimilation.

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classrooms even fly Mexican, instead of American, flags.

Back then the Oath of Citizenship, in which newly naturalized Americans promised to renounce all prior allegiances, was taken seriously. Now the spirit of loyalty to the American Constitution embodied in this oath is openly flouted. In 1998, a naturalized U.S. citizen, Jesus Galvis, a city councilman in Hackensack, New Jersey, who had taken the Oath of Citizenship renouncing all "allegiance and fidelity" to any foreign state, ran for the Colombian Senate and planned, if elected, to serve both "constituencies" and, apparently, to be "loyal" to both the U.S. and Colombian constitutions simultaneously.

Back then we insisted the schools teach in English. Now litigators ensure many Latino children are mostly taught in Spanish. Although bilingual education has produced poor results in teaching English to immigrant children, there is no serious support within our nation's political leadership for ending this flawed program (though the improved results seen in California—which recently ended most bilingual classes after the citizenry passed a statewide referendum—may erode this apathy).

Back then we conducted government business in English and encouraged new immigrants to learn our language so they could fully participate in American life. Now foreign language "rights" are, as of this August, included as official "civil rights" in U.S. law. On August 11, 2000, President Clinton signed Executive Order 13166, which requires all programs using federal funds to "assure" that "language barriers" do not "exclude" non-English speakers from "participation" in all "benefits and services." This new directive does not simply apply to Spanish, but all immigrant languages from Urdu to Khmer. Failure to comply, according to the Justice Department, may be "invidious discrimination on the basis of national origin and race." This notion of a "civil right" to use a foreign language in all federally funded activities has been established with little or no resistance from either the current Congress or opposition candidates.

Back then, ocean travel and long distance communication were slow and expensive. Now, air travel and modern telecommunications are fast and cheap. Leading sociologists tell us that advanced communications at the dawn of the twenty-first century have resulted in a new "transnational" or "postnational" world in which newcomers to America can no longer be considered "immigrants" in the traditional sense, who assimilate to their new country and become loyal Americans. Instead they should be considered "transnational migrants" who move back and forth between nations and cultures and retain their old loyalties, including political ones, such as voting in their old homelands, as well as in the U.S.

Back then we had a "muscle-bound" industrial economy that needed factory workers. Now we have a "brain power" dependent high-tech economy. Nevertheless, our immigration policy continues to favor low-skilled workers. Whereas nine-tenths of native-born Americans have a high school diploma, one in three legal immigrants do not.

Finally, back then immigration was ultimately slowed by congressional action. Now high immigration (legal and illegal) may be, as the new president of the American Sociological Association exclaimed, "perpetual."

Despite all these differences, we are assured assimilation will occur more or less as it did in the past. In Michael Barone's words, "we've been here before." One of the standard analogies for this view is the idea that today's Latinos are similar to yesterday's Italians. Thus Barone tells us the Italians of yesterday, like the Latinos of today, were hard-working, family-oriented immigrants who initially distrusted civic institutions, including schools and political associations, but eventually assimilated. There is some truth in Barone's Italian-Latino analogy, but it stops short of thoroughly examining the crucial differences between then and now.

Italy in the 1900s, unlike Mexico today, did not share a contiguous border with us, did not send about 30 percent of all immigrants to America, and did not supply textbooks, teachers, and national flags to American classrooms. There were no employment preferences, bilingual/bicultural classes, or foreign language "rights" that encouraged group consciousness among Italian immigrants. And of course, the overall number of Italian immigrants was reduced with the restrictionist legislation of the 1920s.

Whatever the defects in the discriminatory Reed-Johnson Immigration Act of 1924 (which kept many of my Sicilian relatives out of the U.S.), we must recognize that such legislation was an important factor in fostering the successful assimilation of record numbers of immigrants into the mainstream of American life (along with other factors such as elite attitudes, the lack of a single dominant language group among immigrants, an emphasis on individual not group rights, national self-confidence, etc.).

In the end, the *type* of assimilation is crucial. No doubt assimilation will occur in some form. American mass culture is a powerful integrating force and will exert a strong influence, particularly on the young. But newcomers could also assimilate into the mindset of group consciousness, ethnic grievances, and perpetual victimhood that is fostered by contemporary elites.

The crucial form of assimilation is not mass cultural, or economic, but what could be called "patriotic assimilation." This means newcomers leave a previous people, join the American people, and "adopt" America's civic heritage "as though," in Lincoln's words, "they were blood of the blood, and flesh of the flesh, of the men who wrote the Declaration [of Independence], and so they are."

Unfortunately, the evidence of patriotic assimilation is troubling. The best evidence we have is a long-term study from the mid-1990s of 5,000 children of immigrants, conducted by Professor Rubén Rumbaut for the Russell Sage Foundation. The study began when the children were in the ninth grade (around 13 years old) and concluded four years later, when the students were around 17. After four years of American high school, the children of Mexican and Filipino immigrants were 50 percent *more* likely to self-identify themselves as "Mexican" and "Filipino," rather than as "Mexican-Americans," "Filipino-Americans" or just plain "Americans." Overall, there were major decreases in students identifying themselves as either Americans or hyphenated-Americans and increases in students identifying themselves either by a generic ethnic category (Latino, Asian) or by national origin (Mexican, Filipino). Thus, "patriotic assimilation" actually decreased dramatically for the children of immi-

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below average. Crime rates, though above the national average, are well below those of blacks.

Where Latinos have lagged behind is in education and in participation in politics. The Latino dropout rate is now far above average. Performance on standardized tests tends to be low. Latino immigrant families put more trust in work than college degrees. And "bilingual" education, in which almost all instruction is in Spanish, does not prepare students well for success in English.

By preventing many Latinos from gaining the English skills necessary for more than menial jobs, "bilingual" education has become an obstacle to Hispanic assimilation. A more important barrier is the sheer number of Latinos. Italians were never the largest single ethnic group in the major cities they settled in; Latinos are. This has encouraged insularity.

Still, I believe the likelihood is strong that Latinos will eventually become interwoven into American life. With luck, it will take less than 100 years.

In 1880 perhaps 250,000 Jews, mostly from Germany, lived in the United States. Then came a torrent of Yiddish-speaking Orthodox Jews from Eastern Europe. Between 1885 and 1914, 3 million immigrants arrived from Russia, about three-quarters of them Jews; perhaps another 1 million Jews arrived from the Austro-Hungarian Empire and elsewhere. This flow was interrupted by World War I, but in 1920-24, another 400,000 arrived.

Many of these Jewish immigrants became socialists. Marxist doctrine enabled Jews to escape their status as non-Christians and identify with gentiles as fellow members of an oppressed proletariat.

There were large Jewish communities in a number of big cities, but by 1920 about half of American Jews lived in greater New York City. They worked mostly as manual laborers, particularly in the garment industry, but they also started thousands of small businesses, some of which became very large. Jewish crime rates were low—though there was Jewish organized crime—and alcoholism was almost nonexistent among immigrant Jews.

Jewish voters were uncomfortable with both the Irish-dominated Democrats and the WASP-dominated Republicans of New York, and the competition for Jewish votes became central in New York politics from the 1920s to the 1950s—a swing state in those years. With the Jewish vote well to the left of the ideological spectrum, this gave both parties an incentive to move left. By the 1950s, Jews achieved income levels far above the national average. But unlike the Irish and Italians they did not trend Republican. They remain one of the most monolithically Democratic voting blocs in the country.

Jews are more secure in the United States today than anywhere at any time in history. Anti-Semitism has faded away, and intermarriage between Jews and gentiles in the U.S. is now over 50 percent. Many Jews worry about the diminishing of Jewish identity due to intermarriage and low childbearing rates. Assimilation is a reality.

Asian immigration to the U.S. begins with the Chinese. Chinese laborers, 90 percent of them males, came to California after the Gold Rush of 1849. Chinese were 9 percent of the state's population in 1870 and 1880, but nativist agitation led to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, and new arrivals dropped.

Between 1884 and 1906, some 300,000 Japanese immigrated to Hawaii and California to work as agricultural laborers. Many later returned to Japan. Then the 1924 immigration act cut off Asian immigration completely, except from the American-controlled Philippines.

After the Immigration Act of 1985 lowered restrictions, however, immigrants from Asia poured in. Fully 2.8 million Asian immigrants arrived from 1981 to 1990, and 1.9 million more came in the six years 1991-96. There were a total of 10 million "Asian and Pacific Islanders" in the United States in 1998, 4 percent of our population. They compose 12 percent of California's population; nearly two-thirds of Hawaii's. Asians are also clustered in Western cities like Seattle, Las Vegas, and Phoenix, in Houston and Chicago, and in the Northeast corridor from Boston to Washington.

Like the Jews, these Asians show a fierce passion for education. They have also started thousands of family-owned retail and manufacturing businesses.

Asian immigrants have entered the United States without the strong political convictions so many Jews brought from Russia. Korean and Vietnamese immigrants, strongly anti-Communist, tend to vote Republican. More recently, California Asians have moved toward the Democrats. But Asian voters, unlike Jews, do not seem to be faithful supporters of an ever-larger state.

The assimilation of Asians in America seems to be proceeding rapidly and is likely to take considerably less than 80 years.

Foes of immigration today, like foes of immigration 100 years ago, fear it will change the basic character of America. But the last century has shown immigrants can be integrated into American life. Some opponents of immigration say we cannot do that again, partly because the new immigrant masses are just too large to be easily melted. But immigration as a percentage of the nation's population is lower now than it was at our immigration peaks in the early 1900s.

Today's immigrants tend to cluster in self-contained enclaves, it is said. But they clustered in the early twentieth century too. The things people now say about L.A. were said about New York City in 1914. New York thrived and so will Los Angeles.

Finally, opponents of immigration argue that today's minorities are bringing habits of mind inimical to America's traditions of tolerance, civic involvement, and voluntary associations. But that was also true of the immigrants of 100 years ago. Fortunately, most people come to America not to replicate their home country but to leave it behind and become Americans. And America, with its long history as a multiethnic society, has so far found ways to productively absorb them all.

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During our last immigration wave, the flow was ultimately slowed by Congress. Today, heavy immigration is uncontrolled.

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grants during one of the most impressionable periods of a young person's life, the four years of high school.

Today, we need serious assimilation initiatives in politics and civil society. Although there are major obstacles to patriotic assimilation that did not exist in the past, especially among elites, strong evidence shows the American people strongly support assimilating newcomers in the traditional patriotic style. Public Agenda, the respected research firm directed by Daniel Yankelovich and Cyrus Vance, reveals in its latest report that Americans today, from all races and ethnic groups, endorse patriotic assimilation.

Thus 87 percent of foreign-born parents, and 88 percent of all parents, say "schools should make a special effort to teach new immigrants about American values." Parents were asked, "What should be a bigger priority": teaching students "to be proud of being part of this country and learn[ing] the rights and responsibilities of citizenship," or focusing on "instilling pride in their ethnic group's identity and heritage?" By 79 percent to 18 percent, parents of all races and ethnicities favored emphasis on "pride in and learning about America." By nearly identical margins (80 percent to 17 percent) Hispanic parents preferred "pride in America" over "pride in one's ethnic heritage."

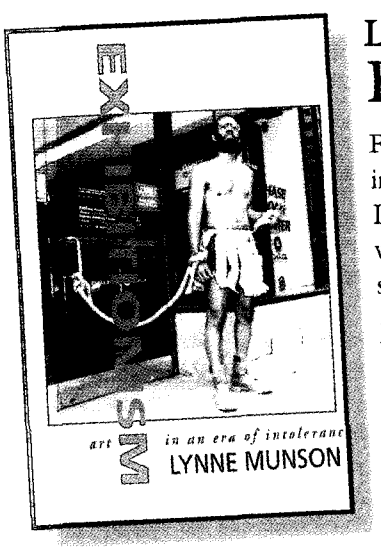
Foreign-born parents overall preferred "pride in America" by 73 percent to 23 percent, African Americans by 66 percent to 29 percent. And by 65 percent to 26 percent, Americans said schools should "help new immigrants absorb America's language and culture as quickly as possible, *even if* their native language and culture are neglected."

Patriotic assimilation can be achieved today as it was in the past. What is needed is an organized, realistic, tough-minded strategy that considers the different circumstances of the twenty-first century. Wishful thinking that assimilation will happen automatically will not do. Civic associations, foundations, government institutions, and corporations should celebrate and affirm the ideals of patriotic assimilation. Group preferences and bilingual education (which hurts immigrant children) should be ended. When given a chance to vote, the American people have rejected both group preferences (passing Proposition 209 in California and I-200 in Washington State) and bilingual education (Proposition 227 in California).

The executive order on language rights should be repealed either by the next administration or by Congress. Civic education in our schools should affirm, not denigrate or ignore, our American principles and our history. Immigration policy, both the overall numbers and criteria (high skill versus low skill, etc.), should be re-examined in the context of our national interest in patriotic assimilation, instead of the special interests of different lobbying groups like the Immigration Lawyers Association.

If the civic integration of immigrants is to succeed in the twenty-first century as it did in the twentieth century, the same amount of money and time that activists, fund-raisers, and politicians put into promoting tax cuts, free trade, and school vouchers must be put into promoting the patriotic assimilation of newcomers to America.

"What went wrong with the NEA and other American art institutions....For a road map of how we arrived at where we are, read this book."—BARBARA ROSE, author and art historian



LYNNE MUNSON
Exhibitionism

From "Piss Christ" to elephant dung, a decade of art wars has agitated public opinion and incited art world fury but has produced little wisdom about what ails our art institutions. In *Exhibitionism*, Lynne Munson identifies a culture of intolerance that has overtaken the art world —"a prejudice that has operated in reverse of the traditional stereotype, favoring the so-called cutting edge over the traditional, preferring political art at the expense of painting."

Drawing on original research and more than a hundred interviews, she explores "the advance of post-modernist academism and how its orthodoxies and prejudices have affected museums, the teaching of art history, the politics of the NEA, and the lives of independent artists. The subject is hot. Her tone is cool. Her case histories speak for themselves. This is a brave book."—ANDREW FORGE, painter and professor of art emeritus, Yale School of Art.

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The Special Case of Mexican Immigration

Why Mexico Is a Problem

By Samuel Huntington

America is often described as a country defined by commitment to a creed formulated in the writings of our Founders. But American identity is only partly a matter of creed. For much of our history we also defined ourselves in racial, religious, ethnic, and cultural terms.

Before the Revolution we thought of ourselves in religious terms: 98 percent of Americans were Protestants, and Catholic Spain and France were our enemies. We also thought of ourselves in racial and ethnic terms: 80 percent of Americans at the time of the Revolution were from the British Isles. The other 20 percent were largely German and Dutch.

America is also often described as a nation of immigrants. We should distinguish immigrants, however, from settlers. Immigrants are people who leave one society and move to a recipient society. Early Americans did not immigrate to an existing society; they established new societies, in some cases for commercial reasons, more often for religious reasons. It was the new societies they created, basically defined by Anglo-Protestant culture, that attracted subsequent generations of immigrants to this country.

Demographer Campbell Gibson has done a very interesting analysis of the evolution of the United States' population. He argues that if no immigrants had come to this country after 1790, the population of the United States in 1990 would have been just about half of what it actually was. Thus, the American people are literally only half an immigrant people.

There have been great efforts in our history to limit immigration. In only one decade in the nineteenth century did the annual intake of immigrants amount to more than 1 percent of the population each year. In three other decades it was slightly over eight-tenths of 1 percent, while in six decades it was less than four-tenths of 1 percent. Obviously immigration has been tremendously important to this country, but the foreign-born population has exceeded 10 percent of our total population only in the seven census years from 1860 to 1930. (When the 2000 census results come out we will be back above the 10 percent level again.)

Mexican immigration poses challenges to the U.S. in a way nothing else has in the past.

As I began to investigate the question of immigration, I came to the conclusion that our real problem is not so much immigration as assimilation. Seventy-five or 100 years ago there were great pressures to ensure that immigrants assimilated to the Anglo-Protestant culture, work ethic, and principles of the American creed. Now we are uncertain what immigrants should assimilate to. And that is a serious problem.

As I went further in my research, I concluded there was a still more significant problem, a problem that encompasses immigration, assimilation, and other things, too—what I will refer to as the Mexican problem. Much of what we now consider to be problems concerning immigration and assimilation really concern *Mexican* immigration and assimilation. Mexican immigration poses challenges to our policies and to our identity in a way nothing else has in the past.

There are five distinctive characteristics of the Mexican question which make it special. First, Mexican immigration is different because of *contiguity*. We have thought of immigration as being

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Illustrations by Michael Prinzo

symbolized by Ellis Island, and perhaps now by Kennedy Airport. But Mexicans do not come across 2,000 miles of ocean. They come, often easily, across 2,000 miles of land border.

Our relationship with Mexico in this regard is in many respects unique in the world. No other First World country has a land frontier with a Third World country—much less one of 2,000 miles. The significance of this border is enhanced by the economic differences between the two countries. The income gap between Mexico and us is the largest between any two contiguous countries in the world.

The second distinctive aspect of today's Mexican immigration concerns *numbers*. Mexican immigration during the past several decades has been very substantial. In 1998 Mexican immigrants constituted 27 percent of the total foreign-born population in this country; the next largest two contingents, Filipinos and Chinese, each amounted to only 4 percent. Mexicans constituted two-thirds of Spanish-speaking immigrants, who in turn were over half of all new arrivals between 1970 and 1996. Our post-1965 wave of immigration differs from previous waves in having a majority from a single non-English language group.

A third distinguishing characteristic of this Mexican immigration is *illegality*. Illegal immigration is overwhelmingly a post-1965 and Mexican phenomenon. In 1995, according to one report, Mexicans made up 62 percent of the immigrants who entered the United States illegally. In 1997, the Immigration and Naturalization Service estimated Mexican illegals were nine times as numerous as the next largest contingent, from El Salvador.

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The next important characteristic of Mexican immigration has been its *concentration* in a particular region. Mexican immigrants are heavily concentrated in the Southwest and particularly in southern California. This has very real consequences. Our Founders emphasized that immigrants would have to be dispersed among what they described as the English population in this country. To the extent that we have a large regional concentration of immigrants, it is a departure from our usual pattern.

Now obviously we have previously had high concentrations of immigrants in particular areas, such as the Irish in Boston, but by and large the immigrants have dispersed to different cities, and those cities have simultaneously hosted many different immigrant groups. This is the case still in New York, where there are many immigrants today, but no group that dominates. In Southern California, though, two-thirds or more of all the children in school are Spanish speaking. As Abe Lowenthal and Katrina Burgess write in *The California-Mexico Connection*, "No school system in a major U.S. city has ever experienced such a large influx of students from a single foreign country. The schools of Los Angeles are becoming Mexican."

Finally, there is the matter of the *persistence* of Mexico's large immigration. Previous waves of immigration fairly soon came to an end. The huge 1840s and '50s influxes from Ireland and Germany were drastically reduced by the Civil War and the easing of the Irish potato famine. The big wave at the turn of the century came to an end with World War I and the restrictive legislation in 1924.

These breaks greatly helped to facilitate the assimilation of the newcomers. In contrast, there does not seem to be any prospect of the current wave, begun over three decades ago, coming to an end soon. Mexican immigration may eventually subside as the Mexican birth rate slows, and possibly as a result of long-term eco-

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> No other First World country has a land frontier with a Third World country.

nomic development in Mexico. But those effects will only occur over a very long term. For the time being we are faced with substantial continued immigration from Mexico.

Sustained high levels of immigration build on themselves. After the first immigrants come from a country, it is easier for others from that country to come. Immigration is not a self-limiting process, it is a self-enhancing one.

And the longer immigration continues, the more difficult politically it is to stop. Leaders of immigrant organizations and interest groups develop a vested interest in expanding their own constituency. Immigration develops political support, and becomes more difficult to limit or reshape.

For all these reasons Mexican immigration is unique. What are the implications of this for assimilation?

The answer appears uncertain. In education and economic activity, Mexicans rate much lower than other immigrant groups. The rate of intermarriage between Hispanics and other Americans appears to be decreasing rather than increasing. (In 1977, 31 percent of all Hispanic marriages were interethnic; in 1994, 25.5 percent were.) With respect to language, I suspect Mexicans will in large part follow the pattern of earlier immigrants, with the third generation being fluent in English, but quite possibly, unlike previous third generations, also fluent in their ancestral language.

All of the characteristics I have mentioned lead to the possibility of a cultural community evolving in the Southwest in which people could pursue their lives within an overwhelmingly Mexican community, without ever having to speak English. This has already happened with the Cubans in Miami, and it could be reproduced on a larger and more significant scale in the Southwest. We know in the coming decades people of Hispanic origin will be a majority of the people in California and eventually in other southwestern states. America is moving in the direction of becoming a bilingual and bicultural society.

Without Mexican immigration, the overall level of immigration to this country would be perhaps two-thirds of what it has been—near the levels recommended by Barbara Jordan's immigration commission a few years ago. Illegal entries would be relatively minor. The average skill and education level of immigrants would be the highest in American history, and the much-debated balance of economic benefits versus costs of immigration would tilt heavily toward the positive side. The bilingual education issue would fade from our agenda. A major potential challenge to the cultural, and conceivably political, integrity of the United States would disappear.

Mexico and Mexican immigration, however, will not disappear, and learning to live with both may become more and more difficult. President-elect Vicente Fox wants to remove all restrictions on the movement of Mexicans into the United States.

In almost every recent year the Border Patrol has stopped about 1 million people attempting to enter the U.S. illegally from Mexico. It is generally estimated that about 300,000 make it across illegally. If over 1 million Mexican soldiers crossed the border, Americans would treat it as a major threat to their national security and react accordingly. The invasion of over 1 million Mexican civilians is a comparable threat to American societal security, and Americans should react against it with comparable vigor.

Mexican immigration looms as a unique and disturbing challenge to our cultural integrity, our national identity, and potentially to our future as a country.

Mexican Immigration Is Different

From a presentation by Peter Skerry to a July 28, 2000 conference on immigration sponsored by the McCormick Tribune Foundation and the Center for Immigration Studies:

The fact is, today's immigrant stream is much less diverse than the one a hundred years ago. Specifically, Mexican-origin individuals predominate in a way that was not true of any single group at the turn of the last century.

In the immigration wave from the 1870s to the 1920s, for example, the largest single group were Germans, and they constituted about 15 percent of that influx. The second largest group was Russians (many of them Jews), and they constituted 12 percent of that influx. Mexicans, on the other hand, currently make up around a third of our total flow. So today's inflow is a whole lot less diverse.

Also, the issue of illegal immigration looms here. Something like 40-60 percent of illegal immigrants are of Mexican origin, which clearly is important. It's also significant that naturalization rates are low for Mexican immigrants—relative to other groups today, and compared to our historical experience.

I don't see much evidence of divided loyalties among second-generation Mexican-Americans. But being a Mexican-American in the Southwest is simply not the same as being a Pole in Chicago. It's important to emphasize that Mexicans are concentrated in one section of the United States that was once part of their homeland. Mexicans lost half of their national territory to the U.S. in the Mexican War in the middle of the nineteenth century. Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the Southwest are continually reminded that the region was once part of Mexico, and many of them feel themselves to be a conquered people. This puts them in a very distinctive situation from other immigrants to America.

Peter Skerry is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

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Mexican Leaders Encourage Split Loyalties

By Georgie Anne Geyer

It was the winter of 1997, and I was sitting with two Mexican diplomats in an exquisitely decorated mansion in the hills above Mexico City. They had all the charm and breeding of the Mexican upper classes, but what they were telling me was something very new and seemingly unlikely: the idea that Mexicans in the U.S. and Mexican-Americans should now be allowed to have "dual nationality" in both countries.

"It all started in Chicago six years ago when I was consul there," Amb. Alejandro Carrillo Castro began. "Colombians already had dual nationality, and Mexicans living there came to me and asked, 'Why not us?' My first reaction was negative, because to start with, we don't proudly send Mexicans abroad. But in Chicago, they told me that there was a very good reason that so many Mexicans were not taking American citizenship—and it's basically an economic reason. Our constitution has provisions that non-citizens cannot own land in Mexico, so they would be forced to give up their land here if they became citizens there.

"I began to think that the answer might lie in having a totally different concept of nationality and citizenship. I began to ask, 'What would happen if people got voting rights in another country and served in the army there, but kept the possibility of going back to their mother country and holding land as if they were citizens there?'"

Thus was born, in 1996 and 1997, the idea of "dual nationality."

"But would that mean that Mexican-Americans could actually vote in both countries?" I asked.

The two men exchanged what seemed to me to be an odd and equivocal look. "Well, that wasn't in the original idea," Amb. Carrillo Castro quickly interjected. "But there *is* a bill now in the Mexican Congress that would allow that."

"And what about Mexicans in the U.S. being called back to serve in the Mexican armed forces?" I then asked.

"Well, that wasn't in the original proposition, either," the other ambassador stated quickly, before adding, "But there *is* a bill in the Mexican Congress that would allow that, too."

Those conversations turned out to be premature—then. For the bills they referred to (largely put up by the Mexican Left), and indeed the entire concept of dual nationality, languished for three years in the Mexican Congress, for the simple reason that the autocratic ruling party—the PRI—knew that Mexicans living in the U.S. would cast their votes massively for the opposition if given a chance.

But then, in July of 2000, Mexico's modern history erupted in long-overdue and welcome change. After 71 years in power, the relentlessly corrupt PRI was overthrown in free elections that brought to the presidency the fresh figure of Vicente Fox, the tall, vivid, northern rancher who had been Coca-Cola president in Mexico and understood both free enterprise and democracy. Now the drama began to develop rapidly.

When new President Fox swept into Washington this fall, he brought with him the new proposition that the U.S. and Mexico should work toward opening the border completely. Given that there are already 8 million Mexican-born adults living in the U.S. (40 percent of them believed illegal), and roughly 350,000 more coming every year, Fox's daring proposal took many Americans' breath away.

In education and economic activity, Mexicans rate much lower than other immigrant groups.

American political leaders reacted cautiously. President Clinton, while welcoming the Mexican President effusively, stated that "We have borders, and we have laws that apply to them, and we have to apply them, and so do the Mexicans." Then he added, "But I think over the long run our countries will become more interdependent." Vice President Al Gore praised Fox for his "big ideas, very large ideas," but also rejected the idea of open borders, at least for today. Texas Govenor George W. Bush said he believed that curbs on the entry of illegal aliens should be strengthened, insisting, "We've got to do a better job of enforcing our border."

It would seem, then, that this dramatic (some would say outrageous) idea of Fox's will simply be put aside. But the idea has its advocates. For instance, before the two Mexican ambassadors proposed the "dual nationality" bill that they described to me in 1997, they went to the U.S. State Department. The idea was enthusiastically encouraged by American diplomats. Already, Peruvians and Colombians have dual voting rights in the U.S. and "at home." After years of actively forbidding and indeed prosecuting dual passports, the U.S. now allows and even encourages them.

Devaluations of American citizenship have been underway for some time now. The Clinton-Gore administration is applauded in pro-immigration circles for avidly pushing through the minting of 1.3 million new citizens in the summer of 1996, for example, with the full intention that these new "other-ethnic" citizens would vote for them that November. (In one August '96 ceremony in Chicago, new citizenship certificates were handed out directly from cardboard boxes to 11,000 immigrants at Soldier Field.) This "Citizenship USA" program went down in the history books for waiving FBI background checks on at least 75,000 men and women, with the result that a high number of those naturalized turned out to be criminal felons. Most of the instructions that caused the Immigration and Naturalization Service to bypass its own rules and regulations came directly from Vice President Gore's office. To the contrary, while Texas Governor George W. Bush has been a friend to Mexican-Americans and new immigrants, his policy towards illegal immigration and border control would be tougher and more traditional.

It's not possible to have a harmonious, stable border," says Vicente Fox, "if we don't solve the economic gap where a worker in Mexico earns $5 a day and a worker in the United States earns $60 a day....

Georgie Anne Geyer is a nationally syndicated columnist and author of Americans No More.

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What I propose here is that we build up a plan, an intelligent, creative, innovative plan, whereby we look for economic convergence." Specifically, Fox calls for a development fund through the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) similar to the $35 billion-a-year European Union development fund which has subsidized jobs and incomes in the poorer countries of Europe. With U.S. grants and sound economic policies in Mexico, Fox insists, the huge income gap between the U.S. and Mexico could be erased in ten years.

One must ask: Is this realistic? Is Mexico really developing so fast that the U.S. could soon afford to have the same casually open borders as the U.S. with Canada?

The answer: Not exactly. In fact, Mexican average wages are actually lower today than they were in 1975. One-sixth of the country lives on $1 a day. Inter-American Development Bank figures report that during the 1990s inequality increased more in Mexico than in any other Latin American country. The substantial growth rate of 5.1 percent a year over the last four years, with manufacturing employment growing by 3 percent a year, simply has not trickled down broadly enough. University of Southern California professor Abraham Lowenthal, a longtime friend of Mexico's, recently stated that Mexico has been falling behind in education and that it risks "permanent marginality" compared to other developed nations. He asks

Are Mexicans Melting into America or Not?

Adapted from "Our Hispanic Predicament" by Linda Chavez, Commentary, *June 1998:*

In Los Angeles in February 1998, a crowd of over 91,000 fans, made up predominantly of Latinos who live and work in southern California, gathered for the Gold Cup soccer match between the Mexican and U.S. national teams. They did not come to root for the home team. Rather, they booed and whistled through the singing of "The Star Spangled Banner," and then proceeded to pelt the players on the American team with food, bottles, and cans.

The incident provoked days of coverage in the local media, most of it antagonistic to the Latino community. In one of dozens of letters that appeared in Los Angeles newspapers, a Mexican-American fan himself complained bitterly that he and his young son had been sprayed with beer and soda by fellow Latinos for having had the temerity to display a small American flag. A player on the U.S. team noted that he and his teammates had been treated far better when they played in Mexico City than at the Los Angeles Coliseum. Dozens of other letter-writers expressed their disgust with Hispanic immigrants who were happy to take advantage of American jobs, education, medical care, and welfare benefits while spitting on American symbols.

Were this mini-riot and the reaction to it an aberration, or a glimpse into a disturbing future? To put it broadly, can the United States successfully assimilate its large and rapidly growing Hispanic population, or are Hispanics becoming a permanently aggrieved and volatile minority? By the year 2008, Hispanic-Americans, currently 29 million strong, will outnumber blacks and form the largest minority group in the country. In 50 years, if trends hold, they will make up one-quarter of the total U.S. population. Not since the first decades of this century has the United States experienced so intense and far-reaching a demographic shift.

Thanks to a 1965 change in immigration law that gave priority to relatives of persons already living in the United States, a tide of poorly educated, non-English-speaking Mexican immigrants began to wash over U.S. towns and cities. Their ranks were swollen further by substantial numbers of illegal immigrants.

By the 1980s, Mexican-Americans were making economic gains. Except among the most recent immigrants from Mexico and among Puerto Ricans and certain other Hispanics where an underclass culture has taken root, the main obstacle in the Hispanic community today is not a lack of economic mobility. The real problem is that, whatever the degree of their economic success, only haltingly are Hispanic immigrants becoming part of the social, political, and cultural fabric of the U.S. The evidence attesting to this is, unfortunately, abundant.

One key indicator is the rate of naturalization. Even after nearly 20 years of U.S. residence, fewer than one in five Mexican-Americans choose to acquire American citizenship. Another indicator is language. As of 1990, three-quarters of Mexican immigrants who arrived in the 1980s still spoke little or no English. About one-quarter of *all* Mexican immigrants have not learned to speak English even after decades in the U.S.

What these numbers reveal is that many Mexicans straddle two worlds. While living and working in the United States, they listen to news from their native country on Spanish-language radio and TV stations, make frequent visits across the border, and send money back home to the tune of $4 billion a year. They hope to return to Mexico permanently once they have gained some financial security.

As if to muddy the waters still further, the Mexican government has begun to take an aggressive interest in its foreign nationals. Its most visible step thus far has been to adopt a law allowing émigrés and their offspring to apply for an attenuated form of Mexican citizenship, including the right to own property in Mexico and to hold a Mexican passport. As soon as the law went into effect in 1998, hundreds lined up at consulates throughout the United States to apply for the new status, many simply as a way of asserting their Mexican identity.

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whether the country's leaders can develop "the attitudes, expectations, and practices that are necessary for democratic politics?"

Meanwhile, in the United States, studies indicate American poverty levels are closely related to new immigrants who are not "making it." A recent report by the Center for Immigration Studies shows that "each wave of immigrants has a higher poverty rate" and warns of a "foreignization of poverty in America." At the same time, the National Academy of Sciences predicts that the record levels of immigration to the U.S. from 1970 onward will account for two-thirds of U.S. population growth between now and the year 2050.

Given the abysmal levels of citizenship training taking place today, and with ideas of dual nationality and even dual citizenship spreading, assimilation is often not taking place as it ought. Within our lifetimes, America could become a "nation" that is more like a piece of real estate inhabited by large numbers of disparate people who have no commitment to, or reverence for, the country's original principles.

Americans sense these problems. Polls in 1998 showed that 30 percent of the public doesn't believe the United States will exist as a nation in 100 years. Twice as many Americans over 65 say we share a common civic culture as those under 18. "There are no terms of commonality," states University of Chicago professor Jean Bethke Elshtain, "so even things like coalition politics become impossible. This means that immigration presents nearly insuperable obstacles. Assimilation and acculturization to what?"

Mexico's politicians want the U.S. as an "escape valve" for their own failures in the realms of economics, politics, and law enforcement. Mexico's head of state says he is the "president of 118 million Mexicans." Since there are only 100 million people in Mexico, that means that he is effectively claiming to represent Mexicans within the U.S. as well. He acknowledges "it is our obligation to better the quality of life and the living conditions in Mexico," but rhetoric is cheap, change is hard.

Meanwhile the U.S. is not very far along in thinking through what it needs to do about Mexican immigration. It refuses to see that a mere one-third of Mexican immigrants to the U.S. are becoming "Americans," that today's citizenship process is a sad joke, and that America is becoming a dangerously Balkanized country. Who is inspired by a divided nation? Who will fight and die for fellow citizens of dual nationality?

Vicente Fox actually did America a favor. He raised in stark terms questions of what we are doing to ourselves.

Mexican Immigrants Can Be Good for America

By Barbara Curtis

Brown and weathered, the men wait on a certain corner just outside our town. In winter they jam their hands in pockets for warmth. In summer they mop their brows with bandannas. Eyes fixed on the road, scanning for pickups or vans, they scramble into those that stop, ready for a day of digging, weeding, hauling—the work no one else seems to want.

I find much to admire in their risk-taking, their hopeful endurance of hardship, their eagerness to work hard and well. Maybe it's because I grew up a poor white girl with an empty spoon myself: depending on buses, carrying groceries for a nickel, going hungry now and then. Maybe it's because my husband and I now head a family with plenty, thanks to our living in a country where hard work is rewarded.

On Labor Day 1985, in our pre-plenty days, I hustled up and down these beautiful hills north of San Francisco myself. One baby in a stroller, another on my back, a bag of flyers for my husband's tree service hanging from a shoulder. The contrast between the well-off families splashing in their pools and my husband and me laboring on Labor Day made the work bittersweet. The sweetness came from believing that if we worked hard we could succeed too.

And we did. But it wasn't just our own hard work that made the company we named Mr. Trees a success. In the beginning, our workers had names like Ernie, Michael, John, Frank—and we encountered nightmarish problems ranging from habitual absenteeism to heroin addiction. Our equipment was stolen, broken, left behind. We despaired of finding productive, stable, and dependable employees.

At the time, more and more Hispanics were moving into northern California, and many were applying for jobs with Mr. Trees. My husband had learned it was more difficult to reform a prima donna with good skills and bad attitude than it was to develop a novice worker already possessed of good character. From then on he hired and trained only men who wanted to work.

This strategy paid off. Fifteen years later we now have a staff we would never have imagined—consistent, capable, and concerned, with names like Francisco, Jose, Felipe, Lorenzo, Juan, Jacobo, Artemio, Paco, and Higinio. They're hardworking, honest, and full of purpose.

Some Mexican immigrants I've met don't want to become citizens because they see too many problems in our culture. These are not people who are in favor of free-for-all sexuality, irreligious schools, teen abortions without parental notification, the steady erosion of morality.

On one level, today's great influx of Hispanics has the potential to give our country's tired ethics and jaded morality a boost. The key is to avoid the liberal largesse which works to encourage their dependence on the state, erode their traditional values, and feed a grievance mentality. A conservative counter-program would offer things like school vouchers to encourage competence and mainstreaming while strengthening family autonomy. The question is, can we Americanize new arrivals in language, citizenship, and economic behavior, without eradicating the old-fashioned virtues that they bring as their most valuable contribution to our society?

Barbara Curtis is a California writer.

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Our New Immigration Predicament

By Steven Camarota

As a result of reforms in immigration law in the 1960s, the United States is currently experiencing the largest sustained wave of immigration in its history. Approximately 800,000 legal immigrants enter the country annually, a dramatic increase from the 1960s when about 300,000 immigrants entered each year. Additionally, several hundred thousand illegal aliens are estimated to settle permanently in the country annually. This influx has caused an enormous growth in the immigrant population, from fewer than 10 million in 1970 (5 percent of the population) to 28 million today (10 percent of all Americans).

In addition to a huge increase in the number of immigrants, the *composition* of our immigrants has changed significantly. Whereas once immigrants arrived largely from Europe, today 85 percent are non-European. More significantly, there has been a sharp and unhealthy decline in the educational level of new immigrants, relative to the level of natives.

In 1999, about one-third of new immigrants were high school dropouts—compared to only 10 percent of natives. This is important because the lack of a high school diploma is one of the best predictors of poverty, welfare use, and low socioeconomic status. It's also important because immigrants with few years of schooling tend to have higher fertility than more educated immigrants or natives, increasing the poverty rate among the next generation of American children.

At the same time that the educational training and skill levels of new immigrants have fallen, schooling has become more important to success in the United States. With immigrants both far more numerous and much less educated compared to the rest of the population, today's immigration is exerting a dual downward pressure on U.S. proficiency and societal success. We may also be laying the foundations for a new Hispanic underclass.

We know many things about immigrants today that we didn't know in the past, simply because in 1994 the Census Bureau started asking all respondents to its Current Population Surveys about their origins. This data set, covering more than 14,000 immigrants, has become an invaluable source of information on the nation's newcomers. And the overall picture of immigrants that has emerged is quite troubling, especially when compared to older census data.

Immigrants once had higher average incomes and lower rates of poverty and welfare use than natives. Now the opposite is true.

For one thing, three decades of accepting many immigrants lacking formal education has resulted in a huge growth in the number of unskilled workers in the U.S. One-third of all high school dropouts are now immigrants.

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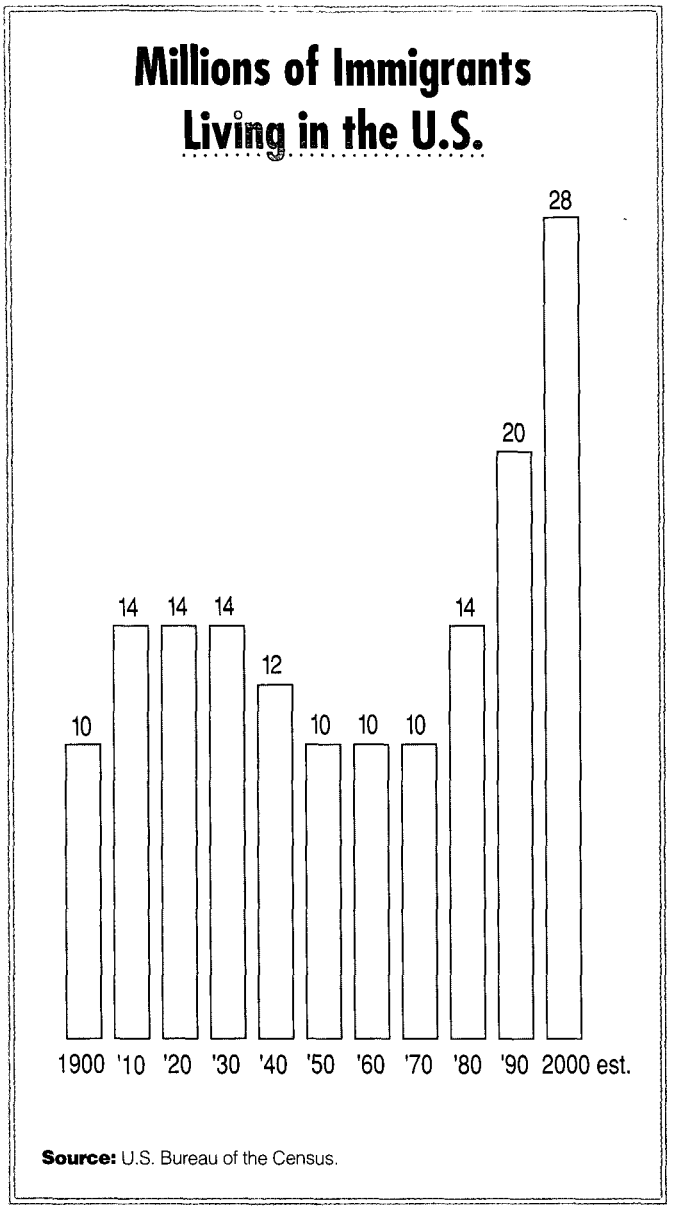
Forty-three percent of our immigrants are employed in low-skill jobs such as farm worker, maid, and construction laborer. Not surprisingly, immigrants are concentrated at the bottom of the wage distribution. One result: An astonishing 62 percent of the minor children of our post-1970 immigrants live in or near poverty (more than double the rate for the children of natives).

Almost one-third of the children of post-1970 immigrants do not have health insurance—also double native rates. This despite the fact immigrants and their children are more likely to be on Medicaid, the government health insurance program for the poor. Even after the 1996 welfare reform reduced eligibility for some legal immigrants, immigrant households continue to use every major welfare program at rates higher than natives.

It was not always so. As Harvard economist George Borjas and others have pointed out, immigrants once had *higher* average incomes and *lower* rates of poverty and welfare use than natives. The decline in immigrant skills since the landmark 1965 federal immigration reform has completely reversed this situation.



The lagging educational levels and job skills of immigrants have also reduced their economic value in another critical area: entrepreneurship. The popular perception is that immigrants are significantly more likely to start and run their own businesses. This used to be true. But today, self-employment is no longer a distinguishing characteristic of immigrants to the U.S.

The lower economic status and educational levels of immigrants shouldn't be overstated. For while we are accepting large numbers of immigrants with poor educations and few skills, we are also receiving significant numbers of new arrivals with school and training levels at the top end of the spectrum. As a result, the proportion of immigrants with a college degree is only slightly lower than among natives, and immigrants are actually a little *more* likely than natives to have graduate degrees. Our immigrant spectrum looks a little like a lopsided barbell, with a large bulge at the bottom of the educational scale and a smaller bulge at the top.

Immigrants from South Asia, Canada, China, Korea, Western Europe, and the Middle East are particularly likely to be college graduates and to have higher incomes and lower rates of poverty and welfare use than even natives. However, immigrants from these regions represent only about 25 percent of our post-1970 flow. Their numbers are dwarfed by immigrants from the Caribbean, Mexico, and the rest of Latin America, who account for more than half of post-1970 arrivals, and who are much less educated than natives.

Low-skill immigrants have contributed significantly to a number of contemporary American social problems. For example, my own research indicates that immigration accounted for 60 percent of the growth in the population lacking health insurance since 1993. A large uninsured population means that other Americans have to pay higher premiums to cover the costs of treating non-paying patients. Taxpayers, too, are affected as federal, state, and local governments struggle to provide care to the uninsured.

Likewise, a good deal of ink has been devoted to ruing the fact that, despite our robust post-1982 expansion, roughly 9 million more Americans live in poverty today than in the late 1970s. If it were not for the 7.5 million immigrants and their young children who are poor, though, this anomaly would not glare at us. Our persistently high rates of child poverty, and numerous other problems, are directly linked to an immigration policy that imports hundreds of thousands of poor people each year.

The low skill level of many immigrants does have certain benefits. A study for the National Research Council (NRC) prepared by top economists and demographers concluded that the primary benefit to the U.S. from immigration comes from a significant increase in the pool of unskilled labor. By increasing our supply of labor, immigration holds down wages at the bottom of the labor market. This allows higher wages for

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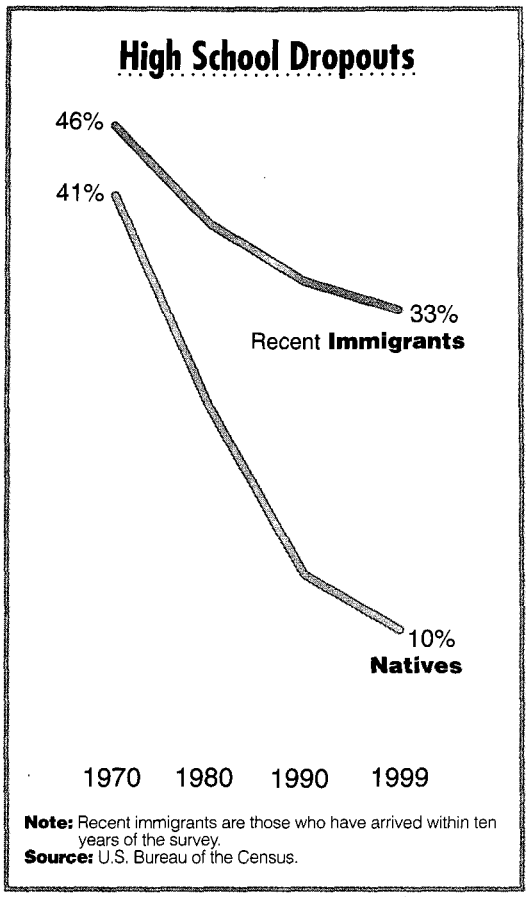
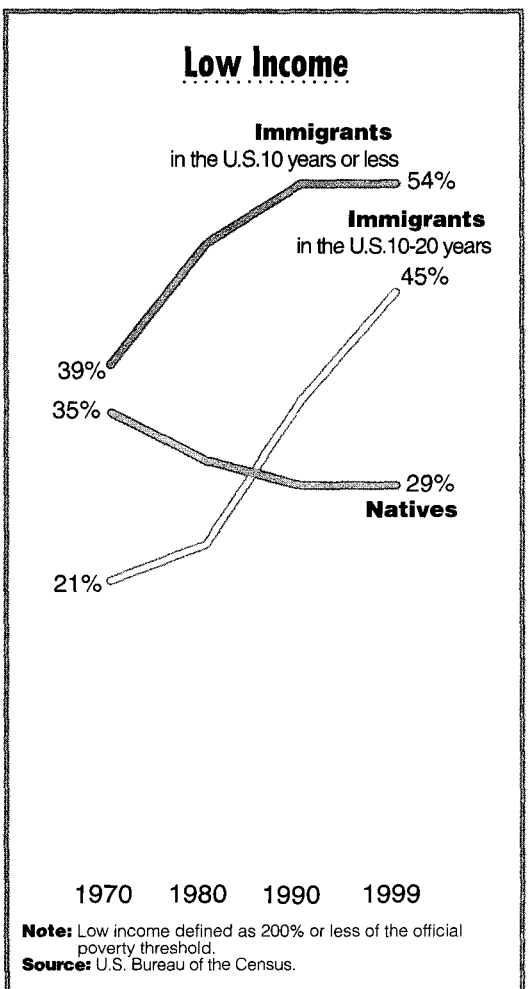
more skilled workers, and better returns on investment for owners of capital. The estimated gain to employers and skilled workers exceeds the loss to the unskilled by roughly $5 billion, for a net gain of around one-tenth of one percent in our $8 trillion economy. The overall economic gain is so small because unskilled workers account for only a small share of our economic output.

The NRC study also estimated that the overall fiscal burden of immigrant households—the government expenditures they require minus the tax revenues they pay—was between $11 billion and $20 billion a year. In other words, their net drain on public finances is actually larger than their estimated private-sector economic benefits. Not surprisingly, the study found that unskilled immigrants are almost always a net fiscal burden, while skilled immigrants are almost always a net fiscal benefit.

The NRC study also found that if today's immigrants and their descendants use services and pay taxes over the course of their lifetimes in a manner similar to immigrants and their descendants in the past (a very big assumption), then the average immigrant who enters today and his children will begin to have a positive effect on public coffers only after he has been in the country for 22 years. It will take an additional 18 years for the average immigrant and his descendants to pay back the burden they imposed for the first 22 years.

When the NRC study projected out the fiscal effects of average immigrants and their descendants into the distant future, it found the total fiscal impact was a positive $80,000. Many advocates of current immigration cite this figure as evidence that immigrants have a positive fiscal effect. What the advocates never mention is that the $80,000 figure is based on a 300-year projection! The study explicitly states it would be "absurd" to argue that this figure represents an actual benefit to public coffers. Meanwhile, the report indicates that present immigrants





are a net fiscal drain and that this drain lasts for several decades.

Defenders of current immigration policy generally have three responses when the problem of low-skill immigrants is pointed out. First, many advocates argue that new immigrants have always started out poor, and that eventually they will catch up. No doubt many immigrants entering today will eventually join the American middle class, but they have much more ground to make up than immigrants of the past. In 1970, 39 percent of immigrants who had arrived in the previous ten years lived in or near poverty, compared to 35 percent of natives. By 1999, in contrast, 54 percent of new immigrants lived in or near poverty, compared to 29 percent of natives. Immigrants now entering the country are clearly starting out much poorer than their past counterparts.

More important than their initial income is how immigrants fare over time. In 1970, immigrants who had been in the country ten to 20 years actually had much lower rates of poverty or near poverty than natives. By 1999, this was completely reversed: Immigrants who had been in the country ten to 20 years were much more likely to live in or near poverty than natives.

Despite our strong economy, many of the million or so permanent newcomers arriving in the U.S. each year now will find it very difficult to achieve middle-class status. In a society that has moved from the industrial age to the information age in one generation, it should come as no surprise that unskilled immigrants are finding it increasingly difficult to join the economic mainstream.

A second response to the skills problem made by advocates of current immigration policy is to concede that, yes, there is a problem, but it is really only associated with illegal immigrants. Illegals, who show up in the data collected by the Census Bureau, are certainly less educated than legal immigrants. But fully 80 percent of the immigrants in the troubling data I've been citing are legal residents.

While the Immigration and Natu-

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ralization Service does not collect information on the educational levels of legal immigrants, a small survey of new legal immigrants in 1996 showed that one-third lacked a high school diploma. In the same year, the Census Bureau's CPS data showed that about one-third of *all* new immigrants (illegals included) also lacked a high school education. So the problem of low immigrant quality is clearly not confined to illegals.

In my own research I have tried to identify likely illegal aliens in Census Bureau data based on their demographic characteristics. I find that excluding illegals does sometimes improve the overall statistics for immigrants, yet in areas like poverty and lack of health insurance coverage, huge gaps remain between legal immigrants and natives.

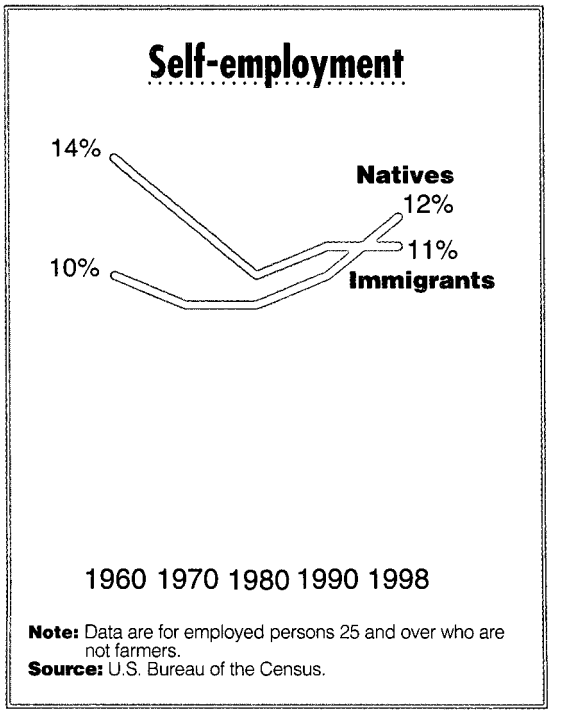
On the other hand, excluding illegals sometimes makes the data look worse and not better. Although they can receive benefits for their native-born children, most illegal aliens do not use welfare, for instance. So the high rates of welfare use and resulting fiscal drains I've described are primarily problems associated with legal, not illegal, immigrants.

Finally, legal immigration is often a major cause of illegal immigration. Research shows that one of the primary factors influencing an alien's decision to emigrate is whether a family member or person from the home community is already in United States. By providing entry to America, communities of recent legal immigrants serve as magnets for illegal immigration. Evaluations of immigration policy must therefore look at the characteristics of *all* immigrants, legal and illegal, as reflective of the nation's immigration rules in their totality.

A third argument made by defenders of current immigration patterns is to blame problems stemming from low immigrant skills on American politics. On the left, advocates argue that if only America had more income redistribution, nationalized health care, and other governmental programs to benefit the poor, immigrants would no longer be a problem. On the right, immigration advocates argue that if only we would dramatically cut back on the size and scope of government—especially welfare programs—then the burdens created by current immigration would not exist.

In reality, neither the left-wing nor right-wing solution is likely to be enacted any time soon. Meanwhile inappropriate immigration is causing social friction and economic loss.

Rather than changing our society to adapt to existing immigration, it would seem to make more sense to change the immigrant stream to fit our society. This would require significantly reducing the number of immigrants permitted to enter without regard to their skills and their ability to compete in and contribute to American society. Doing a great deal more to control illegal immigration will necessarily be part of this. More carefully choosing higher quality legal immigrants will also be vital.



Note: Data are for employed persons 25 and over who are not farmers.
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Inappropriate immigration is currently causing social friction and economic loss.

An odd but formidable coalition of interest groups— including ethnic advocates, some business interests, immigration lawyers, libertarian intellectuals, and the left wing of the Democratic Party—has essentially closed down immigration debate over the last few years. A perceived Hispanic backlash against limitations pushed by Governor Pete Wilson and others in California has terrified Republicans. So for political reasons, changes in immigration policy that might better serve the interests of the country as a whole have been utterly foreclosed.

There is, however, a way to break the logjam. Immigration policy—which is concerned with who may come permanently to America and in what numbers—is different from policy toward immigrants (how we treat legal arrivals already living in the U.S.). Barring legal immigrants from using some welfare programs, as Congress attempted in 1996, is an example of a change in policy toward immigrants that is politically difficult to sustain, of questionable fairness, and useless in addressing our real problem—low immigrant skills.

Yet polls find a majority of Americans, including Hispanics, willing to consider cuts in both legal and illegal immigration. One possible course of action that could be politically popular as well as very helpful to our economy and society would be to, first, embrace a pro-immigrant policy that would seek to better incorporate new immigrants into the United States. Then reduce total numbers of immigrants so as to ease current assimilation strains. And, finally establish a system for picking higher-quality immigrants in the future.

There is no doubt that immigration is a fundamental part of our nation's history. But emotional assessments of the topic have come to dominate today's debate, trumping more practical, dispassionate judgments. With 11 million new immigrants expected to settle in the United States in just the next decade, it would be a good idea to fix our immigration rules sooner rather than later.

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The Case for Choosing More Skilled Immigrants

By George Borjas

The United States offers unequaled social, political, and economic opportunities to anyone lucky enough to enter its borders. Because of these opportunities, many more people want to come to the U.S. than the country is willing to admit. Consider, for example, the visa lottery that has been held annually since 1995. For reasons of "diversity," entry cards are made available to persons originating in "countries with low rates of immigration to the United States." There is a one-month window each year when persons living in the eligible countries can apply for a random chance at winning one of the coveted green cards. The latest lottery, for 2001, drew 11 million qualified (and 2 million disqualified) applications for the 50,000 available entrance slots.

Because of the excess demand for entry visas, our immigration policy has to specify a set of rules to pick and choose from the many applicants. These rules may stress family ties (as is currently done for the bulk of legal immigrants), or national origin (as used to be done), or socioeconomic characteristics (as is done in other countries). Which types of immigrants should the country admit?

The case for preferring one type of immigrant to another will ultimately depend on how one views our national objectives. What should the United States seek to accomplish from immigration? Different goals will inevitably lead to different decisions. For example, if we want immigration policy to relieve the tax burden on native-born taxpayers, it would be fiscally irresponsible to admit millions of low-skilled immigrants who have a high propensity for participating in public assistance programs. In contrast, if our goal is to help the poor of the world by giving many of them an opportunity to live and work in the United States, the increased cost of maintaining the welfare state is the price that Americans will pay for their generosity.

In the past, the economic well-being of our native-born population has played a very influential role in determining the shape and direction of our immigration policy. Arguments that prove or disprove some perceived cost or benefit of immigration for the native population have been tossed like grenades in the immigration debate. In the early 1960s, the Bracero Program (an agricultural guest worker program) was halted because of its perceived harmful impact on the job opportunities of American workers. In the late 1990s, the H-1B visa program (a high-tech guest worker program) was expanded because of its perceived beneficial impact on the job opportunities of American workers.

Suppose that the goal of our immigration policy were indeed to maximize the economic well-being of the native population. We would be seeking two things: a higher per capita income, and a broad distribution of income across the population. The country wants to make natives wealthier, but in a way that does not increase the income disparity among workers already in the country. What type of immigration policy would produce such a result? Specifically, which types of immigrants should the U.S. admit: skilled or unskilled workers?

A strong case can be made that the economic well-being of natives would increase most if our country favored the entry of skilled workers. Consider first the effects of immigration on government taxing and spending. Skilled immigrants earn more, pay higher taxes, and require fewer social services than less-skilled immigrants. Skilled immigration therefore increases the after-tax income of natives, while the tax burden imposed by the arrival of less-skilled immigrants reduces the net wealth of native taxpayers.

Second, consider how immigrants alter the productivity of native workers and businesses. Skilled native workers have much to gain when *less*-skilled immigrants enter the United States. Skilled natives can specialize in the professions while immi-

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grants complement them by taking a variety of service jobs. Compared to the work forces of most immigrant-sending countries, Americans are more skilled; so it would seem most American workers would prefer *unskilled* immigrants who will complement rather than compete with them.

But that is not the end of the story. Immigration also affects the profits of native-owned businesses. Firms that use less-skilled workers in the production line, such as sweatshops, gain from the immigration of the less skilled. Other firms, however, might be better off with skilled immigrants. In fact, many studies suggest that the investments and machines now employed in typical American businesses become more productive when combined with a skilled worker than with an unskilled worker. Most firms, therefore, would gain more if the immigrant flow were composed of skilled workers.

In short, there is a conflict between the type of immigrant preferred by the "typical" U.S. worker versus the "typical" U.S. business. Because productivity is very sensitive to the presence of skilled workers, however, the available economic evidence suggests that per capita income in the United States would rise most if immigration policy favored *skilled* persons.

The gains from skilled immigration will be even larger if the knowledge, skills, and abilities that immigrants bring in can somehow be picked up by natives who interact with them. In fact, many of the arguments that stress the beneficial impact of immigrants on particular industries—like today's reports from Silicon Valley stressing the important role of immigrants in the creation and growth of the U.S. computer industry—emphasize these purported effects.

Finally, skilled immigration has favorable effects on the distribution of U.S. income. High-skill Americans will face more job competition if talented newcomers are allowed in. As a result, wages at the top of the financial ladder will be pulled down, and there will be less income inequality in the U.S. On both efficiency and distributional grounds, therefore, it would seem that the United States would be better off if our immigrant flow were more skilled.

How can the United States select skilled workers from our very large pool of visa applicants? In the past few decades, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand have all instituted point systems that reward certain socioeconomic traits in the admissions formula. In Canada, for example, visa applicants are graded in terms of their age, educational attainment, work experience, English or French language proficiency, and occupation. Those applicants who score enough points qualify for entry into Canada, while those who fail the test are denied entry.

Needless to say, any point system is inherently arbitrary. It is unclear, however, whether the Canadian point system—with its detailed gradations for different types of jobs and different types of workers—is any more arbitrary than the one currently used by the United States (where entry, for the most part, is determined by the answer to a single question: Does the applicant have relatives already residing in the United States?). Today, visa applicants who have relatives in the United States are mostly granted an entry visa; those who do not are usually denied entry.

Of course, shifting to a skills-based point system to choose our immigrants will only help if there are talented workers wishing to move here. We might find that relatively few skilled persons wish to migrate to the United States. The possibility that the immigration market may not "clear" should not be ignored. After all, the United States currently offers 10,000 visas annually to entrepreneurs who are willing to invest $1 million in job-creating businesses. In 1997, however, only 1,361 such visas were granted.

The U.S. could offer financial incentives to the immigrants it truly wants, as Australia did for many years.

There is a possibility, therefore, that adopting a skills-based point system might greatly reduce the number of immigrants admitted, simply because many of the persons who might meet the requirements would not bother to apply for entry. One should not view this potential outcome as a flaw of the point system. It simply means that the types of workers the United States wants to buy are not available at the price the country is willing to offer. When such things happen in other markets, consumers typically do one of two things. Either raise the price we are willing to pay (the U.S. could offer financial incentives to the immigrants it truly wants, as Australia did for many years when it chose to pay some immigrants for the expense of getting there), or withdraw from the market (wait for economic conditions that will bring us the types of workers who would be most beneficial for the country).

Skilled immigration is our best policy *if* the United States wants immigration that maximizes the economic well-being of our native population. This obviously ignores the impact of immigration on other constituencies, such as on the immigrants themselves, or on the populations that remain in the source countries. The U.S. might, for instance, end up draining high-tech workers from source countries. Should we worry about or try to avoid such a brain drain?

In short, there are trade-offs. Pursuing any particular immigration policy helps some groups and may hurt others. The conflicting interests of various demographic, socioeconomic, and ethnic groups will come into play, as well as political and humanitarian concerns. In the end, our immigration goals will reflect a political consensus.

Perhaps after debating these issues, the American people will place all economic concerns aside, and choose an immigration policy that stresses human rights, or domestic partisan advantage. Nonetheless, the public ought to know of the economic consequences of immigration, and the potential economic gains from giving higher priority to more skilled immigrants. The American people should be fully aware of the price they will have to pay if the country sticks with an immigration policy that minimizes or ignores economic benefits.

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Second-Generation Question Mark

By Tamar Jacoby

The Real Test Is How Immigrants' *Children* Will Do

Arjun Malhotra is a classic immigrant success story, albeit with a modern twist. His first entrepreneurial triumph was back at home in India, where he and five buddies started a business in his grandmother's attic; today, HCL is the largest information technology company in India. Since arriving in the United States in 1989, Malhotra has built two enterprises from the ground up, one of them an Internet consulting firm that expects to earn $60 million in the coming year. Like countless immigrants before him, the soft-spoken, frugal engineer—he still wears a watch he bought in India 20 years ago—has managed to combine the best of both worlds: the discipline and drive ingrained in him in the old country and the unparalleled freedom to reinvent yourself that is the hallmark of America. Still, for all his success, Malhotra is worried about his children. "Are they going to have the same drive I had?" he asks. "I don't think they will. I *had* to make something of myself. I had nothing else to rely on. But that's not true in their case, and I think their lives will look very different than mine."

It's a common worry, and if anything, Malhotra's is a mild case. After years of boundless optimism about the likely fate of immigrants and their children, the conventional wisdom among scholars who study them turned markedly darker about a decade ago. The concern began when economists warned of the "declining quality" of the migrants who have arrived since the 1960s, many of them unskilled and poorly educated, destined for the lowest rungs of the American economic ladder. Then, in the early '90s, two seminal academic articles appeared—one by the eminent sociologist Herbert Gans, the other by Cuban-born scholar Alejandro Portes and a young collaborator, Min Zhou—warning that the newcomers' children might do even worse than their parents did. Neither essay was based on empirical findings; there was virtually no research yet on the new second generation. But both offered deeply troubling speculative scenarios, and two grim catch-phrases entered the social-science lexicon: "second-generation decline" and "segmented assimilation"—the likelihood, that is, that some immigrants will assimilate into the middle class, while others assimilate into poverty and the pathologies that come with it. Scholars and public alike began to notice disturbing indices: the large number of Vietnamese refugees on welfare, the rise in Dominican single-parent families, the alarming high-school drop-out rate among Mexican-Americans. Some pessimists began to talk with alarm about the prospect of a permanent immigrant underclass.

For all his success, Malhotra is worried about his children. "Are they going to have the same drive?"

Nearly ten years later, the jury is still out. By now, according to informed estimates, recent immigrants and their children account for nearly 60 million Americans, or close to one-fifth of the population. Until recently, it was the parents who got most of the attention, with press and public drawn to their stirring

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stories of struggle and determination. But in fact, the successes and failures of the second generation, both those born here and those who come as small children, will be far more important in setting the course for ethnic America. Will they learn English? Will they assimilate? Will they make it into the middle class?

This second generation hails from dozens of countries and every conceivable social class, ranging from Arjun Malhotra's millionaire offspring to the children of illiterate Nicaraguan farm workers. The majority have not yet reached adulthood, and their fortunes are far from certain. Portes, now a professor at Princeton, predicts that most will follow a middle course. They won't move up as steadily or easily as the children of the European immigrants who arrived a hundred years ago; nor will they have as much trouble as the blacks and Puerto Ricans who began to enter the middle class in the 1950s. But even this scenario leaves room for a wide array of possibilities, and as their numbers grow a large question mark hangs over the second generation: What affect will they have on the nation they are joining?

The past decade has seen a small explosion of academic interest in the children of immigrants, and some of the research being done supports the gloomy predictions of the early '90s. Two major sociological surveys are under way. One, known as the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS), followed more than 5,000 young people over a period of several years and has produced countless articles and four books, with two more in the works. A second study, overseen by a trio of scholars based at the Russell Sage Foundation, is just now beginning to generate data and will also bear fruit in a welter of publications. Still other projects have zeroed in on particular communities, with researchers observing and interviewing intensively among, say, Vietnamese refugees in New Orleans, or West Indian families in New York. Almost all of these scholars—a small and interconnected group—are heavily influenced by Gans and Portes (also the co-director of CILS), and much of their work reflects a shared skepticism. "The concern that the grown-up children of today's immigrants won't make it," writes Zhou, "runs like a red thread through today's burgeoning scholarly corpus."

The causes of this concern are many and varied. They begin with the educational backgrounds of the parents. Recent immigrants from some countries are highly skilled: over 60 percent of Indians, for example, have completed four years of college (compared to 25 percent of native-born Americans). But many other new arrivals come with little learning: According to one astounding count, in a full quarter of immigrant households, the *most* educated parent has completed less than 8 years of school. Many of these immigrants settle in harsh inner cities where jobs are scarce and schools are poor. Together, the combination of what social scientists call weak "human capital" and "structural conditions" can make it seem all but impossible for immigrant children to succeed.

Many of the enclaves where the newcomers settle are rife with crime, drugs, gangs, broken families, and poverty. Two reporters from the *Los Angeles Times* who followed second-generation graduates of L.A.'s Belmont High School tell story after story of young people threatened or swallowed by the street life around them. One pair of Vietnamese girls are hardly allowed out of the house except to go to school. An Eagle Scout from Colombia who wanted to be a policeman is crippled by random gunshot between rival gangs in his neighborhood. A promising Mexican-American art student must give up his career plans when his alcoholic father is killed in a car crash and he has to get a job to support the family. After nearly a decade of studying newly arrived families in impoverished

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In two studies, immigrant high school students had higher grades than native-born classmates, and they dropped out less.

New Orleans and Los Angeles, Min Zhou is overwhelmed by how difficult it can be just to get through an inner-city school: "It's a daily struggle to get there, never mind succeed," she says.

Still other researchers describe how immigrant kids are influenced—often negatively—by the native-born minorities they meet at school or work. Third- and fourth-generation Hispanics mock children of immigrants for doing their homework; they call them "wannabes" and accuse them of "acting white." Black co-workers instruct West Indians that what seems like rudeness from white colleagues is really racism. It doesn't help that many of the newcomers rarely encounter successful, educated Americans. "The only 'ordinary' middle-class white people they know are the ones they see on TV," explains John Mollenkopf, one of the three researchers running the Russell Sage study.

These experiences and the discrimination many immigrants encounter often drive them to angry, "oppositional" politics. Among the most disturbing of the CILS findings concern the racial and ethnic identities of the second generation. By the time they were seniors in high school, only a third of the young people interviewed identified themselves as Americans or hyphenated Americans. The rest—and even many who *had* seen themselves as "American" a few years before—now classed themselves as simply blacks or Latinos or, reverting back, Mexicans, Filipinos, and Vietnamese.

Still, for all the bad news, there is much—arguably a good deal more—that argues for hopefulness. According to the CILS results, immigrant high school students in the two cities studied, Miami and San Diego, have uniformly higher grades than their native-born classmates. They also drop out less: between half and a third as often. They do far more homework than the other kids in their neighborhoods, spending an average of two hours per day, compared to a national figure of about 30 minutes. Poverty and its hardships do little to dim their ardor: A full 50 percent of California's Vietnamese families are on welfare, but their children are the least likely of any to drop out, and most earn above-average grades. Two-thirds of those interviewed believe that hard work and accomplishment can triumph over any prejudice they've experienced, and about that many (the figure varies slightly with age) say there is no better country than the United States. Perhaps most important, virtually all are adapting linguistically: though nine out of 10 speak another language at home, by the end of high school, 88 percent prefer English. "English is winning," says Rubén Rumbaut, the other co-director of the CILS project. "This generation is going to switch to English even faster than the European immigrants of a hundred years ago."

Many scholars who study the second generation now say that the pessimism of the early '90s was overblown. Though most of them feel there is reason for concern about the future, in fact it's hard to find a thoroughgoing pessimist in the bunch. There is no question that some groups are doing better than others: Chinese, Koreans, and Indians are invariably at the top of their class, Latinos—particularly Mexicans—are at or near the bottom. But in today's booming economy, even the least educated find work, and the overall performance of the CILS group has laid to rest most scholars' worries about a permanent immigrant underclass.

As for the prediction that many immigrants will assimilate into a "culture of poverty," this too seems exaggerated today. "Let's not confuse their lifestyle choices—their taste in clothes and entertainment—with real underclass behavior like criminal activity or dropping out of the labor force," argues Philip Kasinitz, one of the trio leading the Russell Sage study. "Eating junk food, watching TV, doing less homework, a loosening of family ties—that isn't 'ghetto,' that's America, and for all its problems, America is still a strong, vibrant society. I don't see how you can say we're doomed just because many immigrants' children are becoming more like us than their parents are."

Still other scholars—outside the small, interconnected band dominating big research programs—make an even more hopeful case. "The issue—the only issue—is trajectory," says Gregory Rodriguez, an independent researcher associated with the New America Foundation. Rather than asking whether the children of immigrants are doing as well as average Americans, people like Rodriguez, Harvard professor Stephan Thernstrom, and RAND Corporation analyst James Smith suggest, we should be asking only whether these young people are becoming more successful than their parents. "In educational attainment, income, occupation, rates of homeownership—you name it—there is strong and clear-cut evidence of generational progress," says Thernstrom.

These more optimistic scholars reject the pessimists' premises and sometimes their numbers. "Yes," Smith explains, "25 percent of all Americans finish college and only 11 percent of Latinos do. But if you asked how many American children of *junior high school dropouts* finish college, you'd have a very different ratio—and that's the fair comparison with the children of Mexican immigrants." No one imagines the climb will be easy for newcomers like this, but in the long run the more hopeful scholars see little reason to be concerned, as long as the American education system continues to function adequately. "Not everyone arriving today is going to assimilate as fast as the Jews," concedes Thernstrom. "But think about the Italians or the Poles or the Slovaks. Like the poorest of today's immigrants, they too came from rural, peasant backgrounds, and though it took them a few generations, they eventually integrated."

Which camp is right? The issue on which the pessimists are most plausible and troubling is the question of Latino educational attainment. With Mexicans accounting for between 20 and 30 percent of the second generation, they will do more than any other group to determine the bottom line for today's

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newcomers. Yet—and there's no dispute about this—they are faring the worst of any recent arrivals, with Central Americans and Dominicans not far behind.

The Hispanic educational gap starts with the first generation and repeats itself among their children. Close to 60 percent of newcomers from some Asian countries have college degrees; less than 5 percent of Mexicans do. According to CILS, in the San Diego and Miami schools, Asian grades rarely sink below A and B; Latino averages hover around C or lower. Hispanics drop out more frequently than any other group; far fewer of them aspire to go to college. When they do embark on higher education many fewer get degrees, and this is eventually reflected in their occupational status. Nor can these gaps be fully explained just by class differences: Cuban Americans, who come from more privileged backgrounds than most immigrants, also have alarming dropout rates and among the worst grades of any group. "Latino educational attainment is the big elephant in the immigration data, and it's hard not to be pessimistic about it," says Mary Waters, the third member of the Russell Sage trio. "Statistically, the Mexicans dwarf all other groups. They're doing the least well in school, and they're assimilating into an economy that pays less and less to workers with lower levels of education."

Latino immigrants have an impressive array of strengths: among the highest labor force participation rates, strong families, and industrious work habits. But somehow these positive traits do not translate into school performance. Two anecdotes illustrate the critical difference: John Mollenkopf tells of listening to Chinese women in a New York sweatshop talking among themselves, in Mandarin, about which tutoring services would best prepare their kids to take the test for admission to the city's elite high schools. In contrast, according to Min Zhou, now studying Asians and Latinos in Los Angeles, immigrant Hispanic parents often seem alarmingly ignorant about their children's schooling—to the point that one mother in her study thought there must be something terribly wrong when her son had to change schools, though in fact he was only transferring between middle school and high school.

According to Zhou and Portes, ethnic communities are what make the difference for successful groups, and for some reason, in most immigrant cities Asians are proving better at creating communal enclaves. Asians of almost every nationality tend to have high rates of entrepreneurship, particularly entrepreneurship in their own neighborhoods. They form ethnic institutions and organizations that help transmit a seamless code of conduct, emphasizing the importance of education and ostracizing gang activity. Children in Los Angeles's Koreatown choose among a variety of after-school classes: karate, music, SAT cram courses, and others, paid for by their parents and the ethnic businesses in the neighborhood. In nearby Chinatown, middle-class Chinese from the suburbs come back to the enclave to go to church, and poorer mothers from the neighborhood listen to them chat about how their children got into college.

In contrast, according to Zhou and others, many Mexican immigrants don't expect to stay long in the United States. They put down shallower roots. Their families are more isolated, and the organizations in their community are more concerned with migration issues than education. Even the newspapers in Los Angeles's immigrant enclaves reflect the contrast: The Asian papers are filled with ads for after-school classes and tutoring services, while those in the Spanish-language media are for immigration lawyers and international phone service.

The optimists answer this argument, too, with their mantra of "trajectory." According to the Census Bureau, Hispanic household income rose this year for the third year in a row. The group's unemployment figures have never been lower, and its poverty rates, extremely varied by nationality, are declining. Within 20 years of arrival, half of all Latinos own their own homes. "You can't equate not being Taiwanese with having an underclass mentality," maintains Rodriguez. "Mobility is everything, and apocalyptic talk only fans defeatism. What's needed is confidence—a sense of belonging and possibility—and the mobility we're seeing among Latinos today is creating that confidence."

Third-generation Hispanics, however, mock children of immigrants for doing their homework; they accuse them of "acting white."

What is the bottom line? How will most children of immigrants fare in America? Even several generations from now there may be no single answer. Different groups will climb the ladder at different rates. Some will assimilate faster than others. Some will find ethnic enclaves an advantage; others—arguably already the Cubans—will find that they eventually become a hindrance, providing so much of a safety net that many in the second generation get stuck there. Ultimately, as Arjun Malhotra and every immigrant parent before him has discovered, the newcomers' greatest advantage—their hunger and ambition—will erode. This is to be expected; it only means they are becoming more American.

But in the meantime, many members of the second generation are vaulting past their parents and anything their parents ever dreamed of. One of the CILS subjects, a 14-year-old Nicaraguan from Miami, explained to an interviewer who asked about her unusually good grades and study habits, "We're immigrants! We can't afford to just sit around and blow it like others who've been in this country longer and who take everything for granted." This, as Rubén Rumbaut points out, has always been America's "secret ingredient," and today as in the past, all Americans stand to benefit from it.

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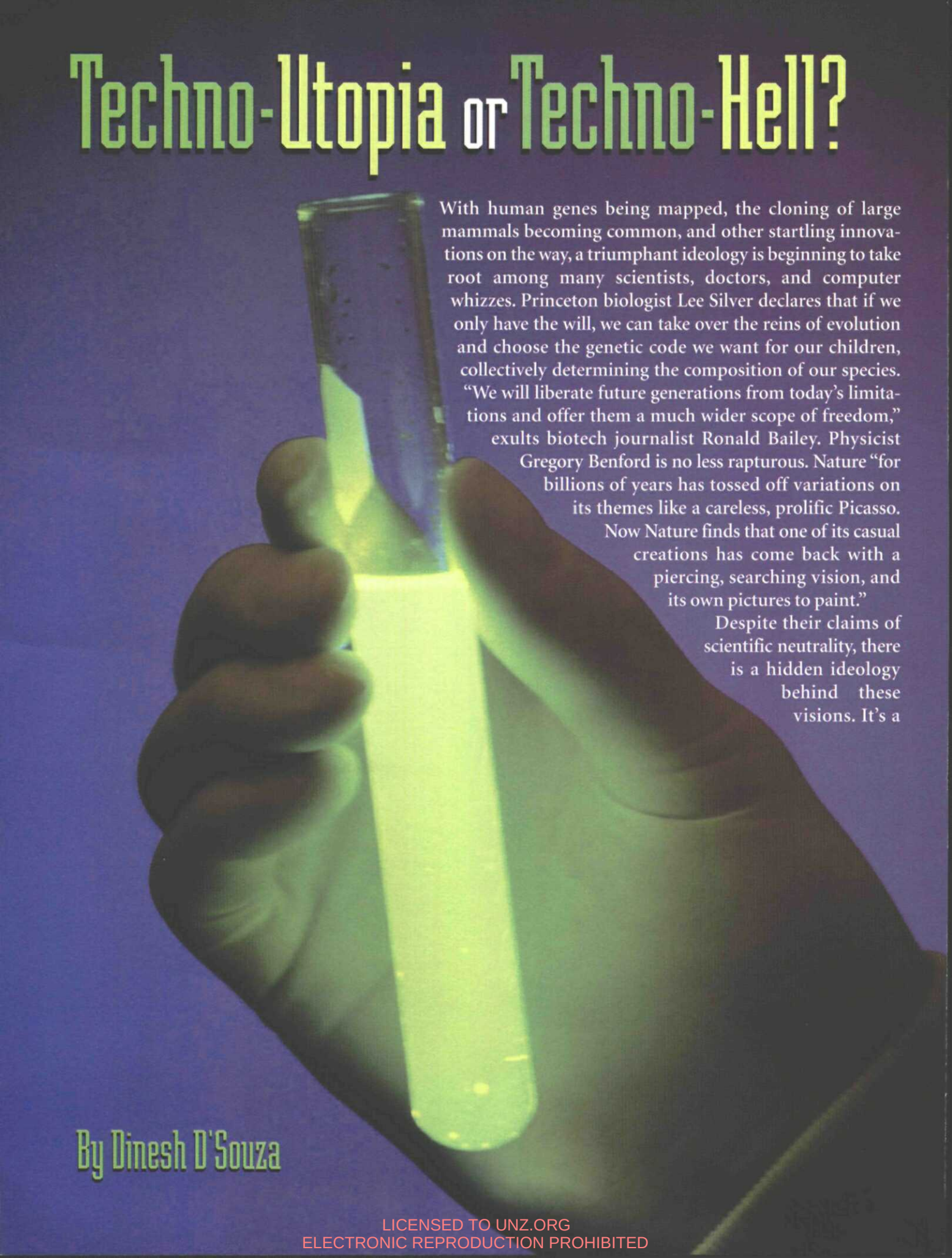
Techno-Utopia or Techno-Hell?



With human genes being mapped, the cloning of large mammals becoming common, and other startling innovations on the way, a triumphant ideology is beginning to take root among many scientists, doctors, and computer whizzes. Princeton biologist Lee Silver declares that if we only have the will, we can take over the reins of evolution and choose the genetic code we want for our children, collectively determining the composition of our species. "We will liberate future generations from today's limitations and offer them a much wider scope of freedom," exults biotech journalist Ronald Bailey. Physicist Gregory Benford is no less rapturous. Nature "for billions of years has tossed off variations on its themes like a careless, prolific Picasso. Now Nature finds that one of its casual creations has come back with a piercing, searching vision, and its own pictures to paint."

Despite their claims of scientific neutrality, there is a hidden ideology behind these visions. It's a

By Dinesh D'Souza

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kind of man-as-superman ethic one might call techno-Nietzscheanism. Nietzsche was the German philosopher who, after announcing that "God is dead," urged the "natural aristocracy" at the top of human society to "live dangerously" and follow their creative passions and "will to power" in order to remake the world. These scientific supermen, Nietzsche urged, would need to go "beyond good and evil" and all conventional morality, and redirect the "weak herd" of everyday citizens.

Having spent a couple of years researching a book on the implications of today's high-tech wealth, I am struck by the prevalence of techno-Nietzschean doctrines among today's technology elites. The techno-Nietzscheans view humans as just molecules, but molecules that know how to rebel! In their view, our moral principles derive not from nature or nature's God—as the Declaration of Independence puts it—but from the arbitrary force of our wills and desires. And soon our wills will be able to make the most momentous choice ever—to relinquish our humanity.

Why should we remain subject to the constraints of our mortality, techno-Nietzscheans wonder? Wealth and technology have given us the keys to unlimited, indeed godlike, power. Let us proceed with the conquest of our own limitations. From now on our children can be products of our own design. Down with our human nature! Up to something greater! Immortality here we come.

Technology gives man unprecedented power, but it cannot say what this power is for.

The techno-Nietzschean doctrines now winning many high-tech converts are also gathering critics. One of the most prominent is bioethicist Leon Kass, a medical doctor and philosopher at the University of Chicago, and adjunct scholar at Washington, D.C.'s American Enterprise Institute.

The trouble with techno-Nietzscheans is not that they themselves are scary, Kass emphasizes. Many "are quite cheerful and nice. But they speak of terrible things like designing and manufacturing children, or changing the nature of humanity, with grins on their faces. They are intoxicated by power, but they show no evidence of responsibility. This is why they are so dangerous." We are being led down new paths "by people who have no moral sense of what is at stake."

Part of the problem, Kass says, is with the nature of modern science itself. "The ancients conceived of science as the understanding of nature, pursued for its own sake," Kass writes. "We moderns view science as power, as control over nature." Modern science assumes the only valid knowledge is scientific knowledge. But that presumption, Kass says, forces us to "shut our eyes to the most important human questions: What is good, what is bad, what is beautiful, what is happiness?" Technology gives man unprecedented power, but it does not say—it cannot say—what this power is for.

Traditionally, Kass writes in his *Toward a More Natural Science*, the purpose of medicine was to restore health to the standard supplied by nature. Modern medicine has gone way beyond this. A couple wants to abort a female fetus because they prefer to have a boy. A woman wants her breasts enlarged to attract male attention, or reduced because they interfere with her golf swing. A man seeks prescription drugs to alter his moods: Prozac when he is down, Ritalin when he is up. Bored with life, a person asks for a lethal injection so he can die a painless death. None of these cases, Kass notes, involve producing better health; in fact some conscript the doctor in undermining, even destroying health.

The stated justification for advances in biotechnology, such as cloning and genetic engineering, is that they will help people to live longer and healthier lives, and to give birth to children who can do the same. Kass concedes the legitimacy of this: "Who would not welcome surgery to correct the genetic defects that lead to sickle-cell anemia, Huntington's disease, and breast cancer, or to protect against the immune deficiency caused by the AIDS virus." I asked Kass if his child needed gene therapy to recover from a deadly disease, would he pursue it? Unhesitatingly, he answered yes.

But precisely the benefits of these technologies, Kass hastened to add, blind us to their dangers. "It is easy to recognize evil pure and simple. It's much harder to recognize the evil in things that are partly good." So what is the danger? The first involves the means used to achieve biotechnology's noble objectives. Kass recites a litany of modern laboratory techniques: experimentation on embryos and cadavers, sperm banks, organ transplantation, test-tube babies, surrogate wombs, sex-change operations, mind-altering drugs, and now cloning and genetic surgery. Many of these are standard practice, Kass says, and yet in thoughtful and decent human beings they violate some visceral sense of what is right and proper, what he calls a "wisdom of repugnance."

Repugnance, he concedes, is not by itself an argument. Someone may, for example, be revolted at the idea of his daughter dating someone of a different race; it does not follow that this feeling is morally justified. But though repugnance may sometimes reflect prejudice, Kass says it usually reflects "a deep natural revulsion to violations we dare not condone." He gives an example: Incest is universally considered an abomination, but why? Can we give adequate logical reasons for this? Not really. Certainly incest may increase the chance for defective offspring, but if this were the sole problem, we should approve of sexual relations between brothers and sisters, and also between parents and children, so long as contraception is used. The horror of incest, Kass says, goes beyond a regard for the health of offspring to a profound natural wisdom no less wise because we cannot justify it scientifically.

But with practices like dissecting cadavers, freezing embryos, transplanting organs, and making babies in test tubes now so common, can they any longer be resisted? Kass admits there is no way to go back. But he hopes "a heightened awareness of what we have been doing" will prevent us from making more serious mistakes in the future. Even freely chosen uses of our biological powers, Kass warns, "carry dangers of degradation, depersonalization, and enfeeblement of soul." We don't choose to be dehumanized, of course. We choose to "fight illness, and then to extend life, and then to pursue immortality, and then to design our children, and

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then to remake our species." Little by little, Kass says, "we are trading away our basic humanity."

But what is wrong, I ask, with seeking to extend life, perhaps even indefinitely? "I don't have a problem with finding cures for diseases that kill people," Kass says. "But now we hear that aging and death are themselves diseases." In an essay subtitled "The Virtue of Finitude" Kass argues that mortality and the natural life cycle are the foundation of our deepest and most meaningful experiences—the basis for taking life seriously, living it passionately, and finding fulfillment in it. "To number our days," Kass writes, "is the condition of making them count." Kass suggests that, in a profound and inexplicable way, the beauty of flowers and sunsets is connected to their passing; the rose that never withered and the sun that hovered endlessly on the horizon would cease to command our astonishment and awe. Thus the project to extend life indefinitely carries with it the danger of "extending the body while diminishing the soul."

It's hard to recognize the evil in things that are partly good.

Kass's real targets are human cloning and genetic engineering. He recognizes the distinction between gene therapy, aimed at curing diseases, and gene enhancement, aimed at improving human beings, but says that in practice no bright line separates the two. If it's O.K. to administer genes that increase height to midgets and dwarves, why isn't it O.K. for you to obtain them for your son who is three inches below average? It will be hard to say no to parents who believe height confers confidence and other advantages, and are willing to pay for their offspring to be taller. Kass points out that plastic surgery, developed to aid accident victims, rapidly became a cosmetic industry.

Producing clones and genetically engineering our children are "inherently despotic" practices, Kass argues, because they reflect our desire to make other people in accordance with our wills. In such situations, children are no longer surprises to their parents and to the world. Rather, they become "custom ordered products" to be judged according to their conformity to the traits others have picked out for them. Cloning and genetic selection are thus exercises in narcissism that amount to "a new form of child abuse."

He points out several possible uses of cloning that make the clone a mere instrument to fulfill someone else's desire: A sick child needs an organ transplant; so a clone is produced to provide one. A dying child is cloned to provide a close replacement. Clones are produced for the purpose of medical research, or to send on space missions, or on dangerous military expeditions. These may sound like abuses of cloning, but Kass notes that these very possibilities have been suggested by advocates of cloning. And even more benign goals like providing a cloned child for an infertile couple reduce clones to the object of other people's desires, he adds.

I ask Kass whether some of those same motives aren't already present today: A couple may want a child because they think it will help their faltering relationship. A tennis fan may seek out an athletic mate with the aim of raising a professional tennis player. These distressing cases exist, Kass admits, but nature often frustrates the desires of parents to use their children as instruments. Cloning, he says, would make an existing social problem immeasurably worse.

Kass charges that cloning would represent a complete redefinition of the relationship between parents and their children. He worries about a "confounding of all normal understandings" of father, mother, sibling, and grandparent, and of all the moral relationships implied by those terms. With cloning, "the usually sad situation of the single parent is here deliberately planned." Further, the clone has a bizarre biological relationship to her single parent. Since the clone is, biologically speaking, an identical twin, she and her mother are *twin sisters*. The clone's biological parents are her grandparents! When the clone grows up and has children, her children will also be her mother's children!

Cloning, Kass argues, represents a radical assault on the already-fragile institution of the family.

When parents attempt to design their children, they are in Kass's view committing a similar abomination. What makes us think we are wise enough to decide such questions? What makes us think we know better than our descendants how their lives should turn out? Perhaps the well-meaning father who gives his daughter brown eyes confronts an angry teenager many years later who says, "Daddy, I can't believe you gave me brown eyes. I want blue eyes." Against this perversity, Kass offers a very different understanding of the role of parents. "When a couple now chooses to procreate, the partners are saying yes to the emergence of a new life in its novelty, saying yes not only to having a child but also, tacitly, to having whatever child the child turns out to be. In accepting our finitude and opening ourselves to our replacement, we are tacitly confessing the limits of our control."

This means our children "are not our property, nor our possessions. Neither are they supposed to live our lives for us, or anyone's life but their own. To be sure, we seek to guide them on their way, imparting to them not just life but nurturing, love, and a way of life; to be sure, they bear our hopes that they will live fine and flourishing lives.... Still, in their genetic distinctiveness and independence are the natural foreshadowing of the deep truth that they have their own and never-before-enacted lives to live."

So where does this leave us? Kass argues that in our endless scientific quest for power over nature, we have lost sight of the ends this power is meant to serve. And so we strive desperately for control—control over nature, control over our lives, control over death, control over our children, control over our species. In Kass's view this pursuit is a response to "a deep human longing that is not fully satisfied with earthly life," and so we labor to extend it and change human nature in the hope we will find true happiness, true wholeness. But we haven't found it yet, and Kass says we are not going to.

In fact, he insists, the path we are on is the path to self-destruction. True progress in such a situation can only mean turning back.

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By John McWhorter

The Gift of Competition

Why It's Time for Black America To Stand Up

Black America is currently mired in a detour, intended by neither blacks nor whites, from the path to the mountaintop that Martin Luther King envisioned. Having learned to cherish victimhood over action, separatism over universalism, and peer-group acceptance over intellectual achievement, a great many blacks are now being slowed on their path to success. As they are shepherded by black leaders into a conviction that they inhabit a fundamentally hostile, alien nation, today's black children are at grave risk of being stunted in their ability to make the best of themselves.

The first step on the road to true equality should be combating victimology. When the process of bringing blacks to equality with whites began in the 1960s, the conception of blacks as a race of victims was appropriate, because it corresponded with reality. Most black people were poor. Those who were not still faced concrete barriers of discrimination in employment, education, and use of public services in all parts of the country.

> Face it: A person you excuse from genuine challenge is a person whose abilities you do not truly respect.

But today, only about a quarter of black Americans are poor. Discrimination is increasingly rare and subtle, and is considered a social stain. Things are not perfect, but let's face it: There are millions of people on earth who would kill to live as all but a few black Americans do today, and there have been untold millions who have triumphed amidst conditions unspeakably worse. We sell ourselves short to pretend otherwise.

In short, black Americans are no longer a race of victims. Instead, ours is a race containing a fraction of victims—the people who remained behind for various reasons while most of the race moved upward. Surely that fraction is not as small as it must be in order for blacks to be equal with whites. However, a fraction it is, and a small enough fraction that it is no longer logical to conceive of these lives as representative of "the condition of the African-American race." Not only does such a conception not correspond to reality, but it is a grievous insult to the millions of black people who have achieved comfortable, meaningful lives over the past four decades.

Let me suggest three new habits of thinking that could help black Americans get beyond the self-imposed obstacle of viewing ourselves as abused pawns.

Mantra Number One should be, "Our successes are no longer 'anecdotes,' they are the norm." In polls, almost half of African Americans say they believe three out of four black people in this country live in ghettos. This is mistaken. The number of black people who lived in ghettos in 1995 was a low one in five. The inner cities are, in my view, America's worst problem. But the important fact is, *most black people are neither poor nor close to it.*

The misconception that most black people are poor perniciously distorts our thinking about race. Recently in the *New York Times*, black activist Manning Marable parsed the state of black America: "A segment of the minority population moves into the corporate and political establishment at the same time that most are pushed even further down the economic ladder." This kind of defeatist rhetoric is not only inaccurate; it's poison.

It is unhealthy to turn a blind eye to one's progress; we must resist enshrining stories of misery and discrimination as "the way it is," while dismissing stories of success or normality as unrepresentative "anecdotes." Too often, the black person with a beautiful house, nice cars, and children in private school is processed as "an exception" and almost an inconvenience. This is obsolete. Too many millions of blacks live comfortable lives to be processed as "lucky." Such people are nothing less than normal; this is exactly the progress the civil rights revolution was for.

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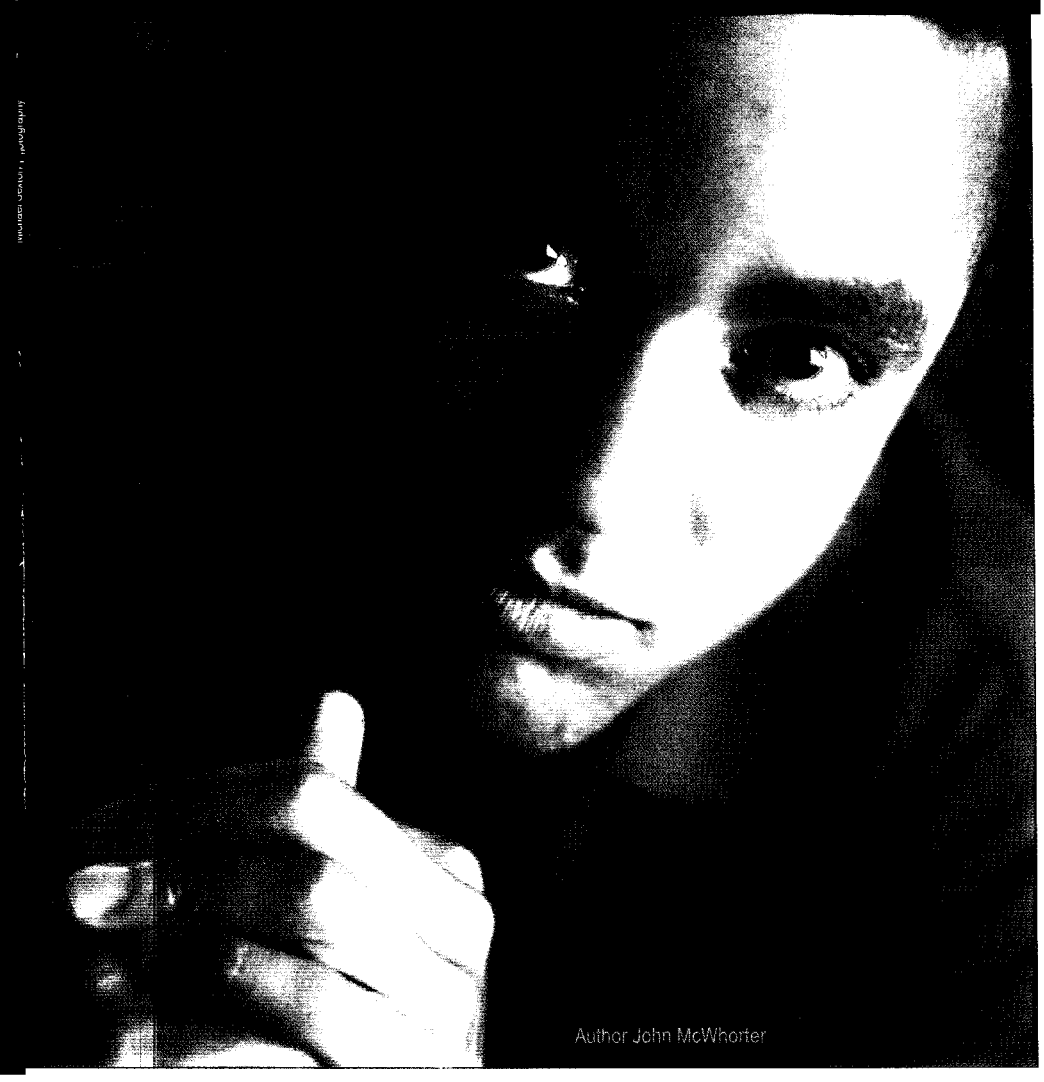
Author John McWhorter

My second mantra for improving our race thinking is, "Occasional inconvenience is not oppression." The last thing I want to convey is that life is perfect for black people in America. I am well aware it is not, as I discuss at length in my book. However, a time comes when facing the vital issue of degree becomes imperative. Failing to draw a line between oppression and "occasional inconvenience," as a cousin of mine phrases it, is infantile. Nobody on earth faces a life free of setbacks of various sorts. If you treat people as incapable of coping with any hardship whatsoever, and expect them to be capable of achievement only under ideal conditions, you are not respecting them or truly considering them equal.

The fact that many black leaders are feeding this view of African Americans is a kind of ideological plague. By indulging the self-righteous doubletalk of black vulnerability we are, ironically, blocking the full integration of blacks into America that the civil rights movement sought.

One can maintain concern for the victimized members of one's culture without conceiving of oneself as a victim as well. This is the difference between addressing victimhood as a problem and adopting it as an identity. When a black person you know has grown up in a war zone of a neighborhood, lost siblings to gunfights, often gone hungry, suffered through drug addiction, and gone to a school so bad it left him with reading and writing skills too low to get a decent job, he is a victim. But just because you are the same color as he, it does not make you a victim when you are occasionally trailed in stores.

The time has come for us to reconceive the black college professor who sits in the trendy restaurant emoting about how oppressed he is, between forkfuls of gourmet pasta, his free hand alternating languidly between his six-dollar glass of cabernet and his white Significant Other's knee under the table, just before catching a flight to a conference where he will meet dozens of African Americans just like him, most of whom got special attention on their job searches because of their color, and most of whose research has been funded by universities that bend over backwards to shower grants upon as much minority-oriented research as possible. O.K., four years ago this professor was driving through a white neighborhood in his Honda Accord and a policeman pulled him over on a drug check. But does that episode negate the victory and richness of the rest of his life? What kind of "oppression" is this?

My third suggested mantra is, "When there is urgent work to be done, people crying 'Wolf!' are wasting our time." Most black Americans can see there is much of the huckster in someone like Al Sharpton. The problem, however, is that victimology is widely accepted as a valid point of view at all levels of the black community.

Reviewing the evidence in the Tawana Brawley case of 1987, one simply cannot avoid the sad truth that this young woman fabricated a story of rape. Yet what black activist Patricia Williams considers important is that "Tawana's terrible story has every black woman's worst fears and experiences wrapped into it. Few will believe a black woman who has been raped by a white man."

Is rape by white, as opposed to black, men really an urgent problem for black women now? To focus upon problems of the past rather than those of the present will solve nothing. The lack of interest in addressing this issue beyond the level of folk conception shown by Williams—a professor of law—suggests a fundamental desire to cloak her race in the mantle of victimhood at all costs. Williams is excusing Sharpton's mendacious duping of the public in this case, and implicitly accepting a professional victimologist as a legitimate African-American leader and role model.

To the extent people like Sharpton and Louis Farrakhan are considered "cool," to the extent that the black man at the party grousing about the "war on blacks" is considered a righteous brother, to the extent that Spike Lee is considered by black people to be "telling it like it is" when he complains Hollywood won't produce movies about the full experience of black people (in a single year that saw *How Stella Got Her Groove Back, Beloved,*

John McWhorter is associate professor of linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley. This is excerpted from his new book, Losing the Race: Self-Sabotage in Black America *(The Free Press).*

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Down in the Delta, Foolish, and *The Wood* released to theaters), then black America is in trouble.

There is a deeply felt sentiment in the black community that we are not to disagree with one another in public. This is why so many millions of moderate black Americans are inclined to accept barely credible depictions of the modern black condition as valid. The "united front" strategy was a valuable survival tactic in the old days, but we only maintain it today on pain of holding ourselves back. Unfounded and unfocused resentment is a handicap to emotional health and being all that one can be.

So where is the route to true equality? I suggest the single best step we could take would be to give black students the gift of competition. That means dealing with affirmative action.

Affirmative action runs up against something central to the self-conception of all human beings: being rewarded for one's efforts. I believe that when it was instituted in the 1960s, affirmative action was a necessary emergency measure. It afforded a race damaged by discrimination extraordinary chances to enter the American mainstream. I depart from most black thinkers by not believing the policy ought be continued until there is no racism whatsoever in the country and black Americans have achieved complete parity with whites.

When it comes to university admissions, affirmative action is no longer justifiable. Some claim social conditions make it impossible for minority students to achieve good grades and test scores. This is no longer true. There are now many black students in schools where white and Asian counterparts routinely do good work. Even in lousy urban schools, poor Asian immigrants or even black Caribbeans often perform much better under the same conditions. Many will answer, "Well, they have a different culture"—and that's my answer: The evidence suggests most black educational failure is due to a sense of separation from scholarly endeavor internal to African-American culture. Tragically, black culture in America today is shot through with a wariness of school.

> The inner cities are America's worst problem. But the important fact is, most black people are neither poor nor close to it.

Only genuine competition can reduce this. There is a misconception that affirmative action is used today merely to give a small boost, choosing the minority student over the white one only in the case of otherwise parallel qualifications. Not true. Under today's affirmative action policies, colleges regularly admit black students with much lower grade point averages, and SAT scores hundreds of points below the cutoff for whites and Asians. William Bowen and Derek Bok examined 28 selective colleges; among students who scored 1200 to 1249 on the SAT, 60 percent of the blacks were admitted as opposed to 19 percent of whites.

Thus the question facing us is *not,* "Should we admit black students with top grades and scores over white students with the same credentials, since racism keeps the numbers of such black students low, and since these students will perform as well as whites once admitted?" Who would have any problem with that? Unfortunately, average black students do not present grades and scores equivalent to other students'; racism plays at most a background role in the disparity; and the black students admitted do not generally perform at the level of whites. Thus the actual question is, "Should we admit black students hindered from making top grades and test scores by a tendency to discourage one another from doing so, given that these students will continue their substandard performance for this same reason once admitted?"

I believe the answer is no.

As an institutionalized leg up, affirmative action leaves black Americans with the most systematically diluted responsibility for their fate of any group in America. The policy divests blacks and Latinos of the unalloyed sense of personal responsibility for their accomplishments. By separating rewards from academic achievements, quota-based set-asides dampen minority initiative.

Affirmative action also makes black people look unintelligent to others. With it widely known among a student body that most minority students were admitted with test scores and GPAs that would have barred white and Asian applicants, it is difficult for many white students to avoid private suspicions that blacks simply aren't as swift. This will in turn encourage suspicion in black students, and thus perpetuate interracial alienation on campus and undermine the mutual respect that successful integration requires.

Affirmative action can be especially grating when most of the college students benefiting from it are obviously middle-class, as they are today. When affirmative action aimed at improving the lot of the disenfranchised, its displacement of some better qualified applicants could be justified in the name of a greater good. Preferring middle-class black children who have suffered no more than most white or Asian students, however, is more clearly unfair.

Though affirmative action was introduced as a way to uplift the black race, there is evidence it no longer does so. The black/white scholastic gap closed steadily until the late 1980s. Since then, black academic performance has plateaued. Even in excellent schools like those of Shaker Heights or Evanston, Illinois, large numbers of black students continue to do poorly. I believe this shows affirmative action has done all it can to help close the black/white scholastic gap.

Though content and financially stable, today's affirmative action beneficiaries are raising children with the lowest grades and test scores in the United States. In seeking the cause of today's educational plateau, we must look for a factor that disproportionately affects black children who go to college. That factor is not poor inner-city schools, because they account for only a fraction of the black college student population. And it is not racism, because black students continue to lag behind even in contexts where there is little racism.

No factor so obviously fulfills this requirement as the tendency for black students to hold schoolwork at half an arm's length, a phenomenon I discuss at length in my new book. The plateau demonstrates very few black students feel spontaneously compelled to reach for the highest bar. And affirmative action doesn't help this situation.

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If every black student knows that not even the most selective schools in the country require the very best grades or test scores of black students, and that fine universities just below this level will readily admit blacks by virtue of their "leadership qualities" or "spark," and that solid second-tier colleges will admit them with even less in their portfolio, what motivation is there for any but the occasional driven student to devote his deepest effort to school?

I can attest, for example, that in secondary school I deliberately refrained from working to my highest potential because I knew I would be accepted to even top universities without doing so. Almost any black child knows from an early age that there is something called affirmative action. I was aware of this from at least the age of ten. And so I was quite satisfied to make B+'s and A–'s rather than the A's and A+'s I could have made with extra time and effort. I was lucky that, thanks to my knack for school, my less-than-optimum efforts still put me within reach of fine colleges. But the same sentiment operates in black students less naturally nerdy than I was.

Studies show that black students (even middle-class ones) are less concerned than whites that weak school performance will affect their chances in life. One could think of few better ways to depress a race's propensity for pushing itself and ultimately succeeding than such a view.

We often hear that black students underperform because teachers do not require enough of them. Isn't permanently exempting black students from true competition also requiring too little? A parent teaches a child to ride a bicycle by offering training wheels for a while. But there comes a point when Dad pushes you down the hill to ride by yourself for the first time. Only then do you master the subtle muscular poise that allows you to stay magically balanced and rolling along. Looking back, you realize your success would have been impossible without taking a plunge; only when the danger of falling down looms do your mind and body avidly seek the interplay to avoid it. Black students simply will not get beyond the average level they post today so long as Dad continues to trot alongside holding the bike.

> Very few black students feel spontaneously compelled to reach for the highest bar. And affirmative action doesn't help.

The harms of affirmative action—sowing self-doubt, giving the appearance of dimness, displacing equally qualified whites, and most importantly the blunting of incentive—were worth bearing in the immediate aftermath of the civil rights revolution. After 30 years, however, the harms remain, damaging health, while black access to the economic and cultural mainstreams are well established and in no danger of decreasing.

Unfortunately, some backers of affirmative action are focused more on past injustices than current realities. Harvard professor Nathan Glazer, for instance, who is white, supports affirmative action out of a desire to atone for what was done to blacks in decades past. But it dehumanizes today's black students to establish policies for them on the basis of what happened to their ancestors. This casts them as mythic victims in a historical play, rather than treating them as living, breathing human beings whose vital needs ought to be addressed in the present tense. Face it: A person you excuse from genuine challenge is a person whose abilities you do not truly respect.

The question is not how we relieve good-thinking people like Glazer of their guilt for the historical misdeeds of their race, but how we bring present-day black people into equality with whites. The guiding mistake of people like Glazer is the misconception that these two things are one and the same. There is no logical guarantee that what accomplishes the former will also accomplish the latter.

Despite their august credentials and beneficent intentions, white scholars like Glazer, Ronald Dworkin, William Bowen, and Derek Bok are driven more by their desire to redeem themselves (as Shelby Steele puts it) than to truly help black people. Concerned white people: Do not turn human beings into pawns in a sociological experiment that will not personally affect any of your nearest and dearest. If you really believe black people are "fellow Americans," treat them as such. I thank you for your concern, but must tell you this: You are selling us short.

Many suppose that given a choice between excellence and "diversity," the latter ought to win out. But it's time to put excellence rather than headcounts first, because exposing black students to serious competition is the only way to start them on the path to closing the black/white gap once and for all.

To be sure, there would be an unpleasant by-product of this approach. The number of minority students admitted to selective universities would at first go down. There is a strong tendency to reject this prospect as "resegregation," but that is hyperbole. The black/white scholastic lag is not small, but it is hardly so vast that no minority students, or even just a handful, are eligible for admission to good schools. For example, the total of black students admitted to Berkeley after the ban on preferences took effect was 43 percent less than the previous year's. That is hardly wonderful, but note that the decline was less than half. What's more, in the same year, black admissions *increased* at three second-tier but solid University of California schools (Santa Cruz, Irvine, and Riverside). In total, minority admissions in California and Texas went down in only six out of 74 schools after racial preferences were banned.

We must not swallow the "Yale or jail" myth under which activists indignantly defend black students' "right" to attend top schools, with the suggestion that otherwise they'll be prowling the street with weapons. In truth, black students not admitted to the very top schools would easily be admitted to any number of fine second-tier ones. It is said the top schools are virtually the only path to the most prestigious jobs, but this is not borne out by the facts. One does not wind up in a trailer park because one attended Rutgers instead of Princeton. I, for example, received my B.A. from Rutgers and nevertheless have done pretty well. Of today's African-American congressmen, high-ranking army officers, people earning Ph.D.s from 1992-96, MacArthur Foundation award winners of 1981-88, and top 50 business officials, none but a sliver attended top-rated colleges. Surely Harvard connections do not hurt, but just as surely, such credentials are but one of several factors that determine one's position in life.

Whites have tried to bring blacks into the academic arena with permanently lowered admissions standards, only to see black scholarly performance freeze at a substandard level,

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Transcript

WORDS WORTH REPEATING

What I Want from a Jewish Vice President

By Michael Medved

The following is excerpted from a speech given by author Michael Medved at the annual meeting of the national Jewish organization Toward Tradition, held in Washington, D.C.

I have warm personal feelings toward Joe Lieberman, whom I've known for 31 years. When I was far away from Jewish commitment, and very far away from orthodoxy, Joe Lieberman was one of the first Sabbath-observing Jews with whom I had contact. His was a welcoming, sincere, wonderful Jewish home.

Though I am a Republican and enthusiastic supporter of the Bush-Cheney ticket, I believe when all the shouting dies down, and we look at the deeper meaning of what has happened, we will all have reason to feel grateful that the first Jew selected for a national ticket was a serious Jew. We have never in this country's history had a member of Congress anywhere close to the level of Jewish observance that Joe Lieberman has maintained. Regardless of any other issues in this campaign, without question my life as a Sabbath-observing Jew is easier because Joe Lieberman became a candidate for Vice President, and set a very public example of Jewish observance and intensity.

Nonetheless, I could never support the Gore-Lieberman ticket—especially since Lieberman has traded in his core values for Gore values. As I watched this appalling process, I was tempted to paraphrase another vice presidential candidate, "I know Joe Lieberman. Joe Lieberman was a friend of mine. And that guy up there running for Vice President, he's no Joe Lieberman."

As someone who cares about Joe Lieberman and likes the man, I have found this process heartbreaking and even pathetic. This is a man who voted seven times in the Senate for vouchers in one version or another, but now says, "I was never for vouchers." A man who supported Proposition 209 in California but now says, "I've always supported affirmative action." Then there were his tortured distortions of traditional Jewish teaching to justify his own puzzling support for a radical gay rights agenda and partial-birth abortion. The deconstruction of Joe Lieberman is a tragedy. How is Joe going to put his integrity back together after the election?

> WHAT HAS MARGINALIZED AMERICAN JEWS IS NOT THEIR JEWISHNESS, BUT THEIR ALIENATION FROM RELIGIOUS BELIEF.

And how will our community sort out its surprisingly complex response to his nomination? Initially, I was truly amazed at the outpouring of joy among Jews, with people crying emotionally and going crazy—I never expected that. After all, there are ten members of the U.S. Senate who identify themselves as Jewish. We are not lacking in prominence or power in the United States. So why were people so excited over Lieberman's nomination?

The reason, I think, reflects the fact that most American Jews, despite our prominence, still feel marginal in this country. The Lieberman nomination said to them, "You are not as marginal as you thought; you can be mainstream."

Later I was similarly surprised that organizations like the Anti-Defamation League and numerous prominent Jewish spokesmen criticized Lieberman for too much public emphasis on his own religious faith and his stress on the importance of religious values in politics. Suddenly, the pride of the Jews was supposed to be bad for the Jews because he breached the wall of separation between church (or *shul*) and state. How did that happen? Wasn't he the guy who was supposed to make us all feel less marginal?

Here is the secret to this puzzle, and it is profound: The thing that has marginalized Jews compared to other Americans is not their Jewishness, but rather their atheism, their alienation from religious belief. The Lieberman nomination didn't undo *that* marginalization. In fact, for American Jews who are agnostic or atheist, his selection reinforced their isolation, emphasizing a sense that most Jews occupy a position outside the U.S. mainstream: Here is the most visible Jew in the country, and he is talking about his passionate belief in God. What could make you feel more left out, more like the guest who wasn't invited to the party?

Lieberman was perfectly comfortable speaking in that black Baptist church in Detroit, just as Rabbi Lapin of Toward Tradition is comfortable going to any church across the country to speak. Most secular American Jews would never feel comfortable speaking in such a setting. When Joe Lieberman talks about praying in public and the importance of religion in American life, suddenly many of his kinsmen feel even

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more excluded—because their real minority status is not as Jews, but as people who are uneasy with the idea of a God ruling the universe.

British writer Geoffrey Wheatcroft offered a particularly interesting observation on faith and politics concerning the Lieberman nomination. He wrote in the *New York Times*: "Across the Atlantic the role of religion in the American presidential race has been followed with a mixture of interest and polite puzzlement.... Europe is the cradle of institutional Christianity, but today, institutional religion in Europe is on the point of collapse." Wheatcroft observes that fewer than one French citizen in ten goes to church even once a year. "The Roman Catholic Church," he continues, "has never been less influential in the life of that nation. In my country, we have a Church of England 'by law established,' with the queen as its supreme governor. And its services are now regularly attended by a mere two percent of the population. So it goes across Europe; the collapse of organized Christianity...can be seen from Ireland to Italy. Of the advanced industrial world, only in the United States does religion thrive.... A remarkable 40 percent of Americans claim to worship in various churches, synagogues, and mosques."

Anyone who has traveled around the world knows America is different from other Western nations. Religion is taken seriously here, and it is natural for our candidates to invoke the name of God and speak of religious themes in their public utterances. The overwhelming majority of Americans, including those who are not necessarily religious themselves, conclude that the influence of faith in the United States is a good thing. It helps reduce crime, it helps keep families together, it helps give hope to those in poverty.

Joe Lieberman deserves some credit for stating publicly that America's greater religiosity needs to be maintained and enhanced. But here is my challenge to him, and to those who supported him despite the zigs and zags in his candidacy: Can you think of even one area of policy where his political ticket would do anything to sustain, nurture, or protect America's religiosity? Is there a single proposal by the Democrats designed to preserve America's exceptionalism when it comes to the relevance of religious faith? The answer, appallingly, is no.

I'm not urging any violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. I am suggesting rolling back some of the assaults on religion that the government continues to perpetrate. For example, curricula in public schools regularly—and disastrously—deny America's religious heritage. Thanksgiving, for instance, has been changed from a holiday where we thank God, to a feast in which we're supposed to thank the Indians. In Hillary Clinton's new home town of Chappaqua, New York, the public schools have taken out any mention of the Pilgrims at all and only mention the Indians. This same trend is visible at colleges where professors insist our founders were deists. Thomas Jefferson was indeed a religious non-conformist, but he was the exception. Most members of the Continental Congress were deeply religious in a very conventional way, attending services even when inconvenient, mandating frequent public prayer and official fast days.

IS THERE ONE AREA OF POLICY WHERE GORE-LIEBERMAN WOULD DO ANYTHING TO NURTURE AMERICA'S RELIGIOSITY? APPALLINGLY, NO.

Yet today, children in public schools in America would never learn that. Nor would they learn that the core of the abolitionist movement which finally eliminated the stain of slavery was religious, and yes, Christian. Schoolchildren celebrating the Martin Luther King holiday should understand the deeply, irreducibly Christian mission of his life's work. This is one area where a Joe Lieberman, and policy leaders in general, could make a real change.

There are many other public issues intimately connected to religion in America. For example, "charitable choice," which allows government to help private charities to continue doing important social work, regardless of whether they have a religious affiliation. Where is Joe Lieberman on this? Or on vouchers, which would have a profound effect on religious schooling? What about the National Endowment for the Arts and other agencies which have repeatedly sponsored government-funded assaults on religion? (In Rochester, New York, federal money was recently used to compose a toilet sculpture made of torn-up Bibles.) Where is Joe Lieberman on that?

It's great that Joe Lieberman speaks publicly of religion and its positive influence, but why can't a public school teacher be allowed to do the same thing? The double standard is absolutely remarkable. We say that the Vice President can speak of religion in a way that would result in the firing of a high school football coach. That is absurd. And I don't want to hear that the difference is that the football coach is paid by the government, because the entire Gore-Lieberman campaign is federally funded. Right now tax money is being used to sustain Lieberman's Sabbath observance. Wonderful. But let us now have the same protection for all expressions of religion. If Joe Lieberman wants to reduce the militantly intolerant secularist stance of today's federal government, he could make a real contribution.

I would like to think that some day I will be able to, once again, enjoy a Sabbath observance with Joe and Hadassah Lieberman, after this bitter campaign remains only a memory. Meanwhile, with all other Jews, we continue to await the coming of the messiah, because, alas, it's not Joe Lieberman.

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In Real Life

FIRST-PERSON AMERICA

TAKING A WHACK AT GOLF

By Blake Hurst

TARKIO GOLF CLUB, MISSOURI—I came to golf rather late in life, playing my first round in my middle thirties. Moreover, I have little athletic talent, no muscle memory, no ability to learn from my mistakes, and a slice that just won't go away. So golf is no fun for me. And I'm going to keep playing forever, because masochism is a lifelong affliction.

In my last round of golf, my three partners all started with nice tee shots. I jerked mine 220 yards left, out of bounds, into the driving range. On my second shot off the tee (I never play golf without a few spare balls in my pocket), I hit the ball right to the middle of the fairway. Unfortunately, it was the *wrong* fairway.

I waited until the folks playing the third hole had played through, then lined up for my third shot. (That would be my third shot before the one stroke penalty for losing the ball. But who's counting?) I hit it right, scattering the party on the third tee box. I couldn't find my ball, which was really frustrating, because I should have been able to track its trajectory by observing which way the various people in the ball's path ducked for cover. I threw down another ball, and pitched my fourth shot clear over the green. And then I three-putted. When my dentist is unavailable for recreational root canals, this is what I do for fun.

In my hometown, golf is the farmer's sport. Rarely found on our course are the sort of golfers that embody the sport in the popular imagination. There are no doctors, hardly a lawyer to be found, Nike swooshes are almost nonexistent, and John Deere is the most popular logo, with nary a crocodile on a single shirt.

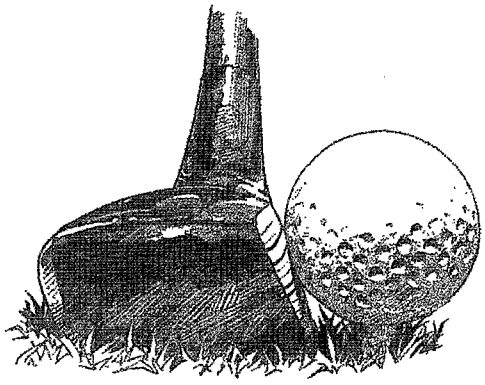
Farmers like golf because it is an individual sport. When the round is done, and the scorecard is added (or estimated—I have a friend who says his best club is the eraser on his pencil), there is no one to blame except yourself. Farmers don't cooperate well with others, which is why agriculture is dominated by sole-proprietors. And why our golf course is populated by overweight guys with forearms like tree trunks.

Also, a heavily tended course is balm to an agriculturist's soul. No weeds, no bugs, and sprinklers provide what Mother Nature so often does not. On our farm, we never reach the sort of straight rows, pristine field borders, and well-maintained outbuildings that we aspire to, but the groundskeepers at the local course provide what our farm does not—tidiness, neatness, and order.

Farmers hate trees, because they snag equipment and steal water from income-producing crops. Disliking oaks and maples is not a sentiment one can express in polite society. But whenever they drill an ill-aimed tee shot into some hulking shade tree, all golfers share my disgust.

Mark Twain once remarked that golf is a "good walk spoiled." Not at my club. Nobody there walks, ever. A farmer seen walking on our course would be the subject of speculation as to what the absence of a golf cart implied about his financial status. Everybody rides, and if two players are playing together, each takes his own cart. The cart is driven close enough to the ball that the backswing will barely miss the front of the vehicle, and although the course rules mandate a 30-foot distance from the greens to wheeled vehicles, that rule is seen as an inconvenience to be ignored as soon as the clubhouse is out of sight. Many might attribute this aversion to exercise to a character flaw, but true golfers know that carts are important because they speed up play, shortening the time between bad shots.

When my wife Julie and I started golfing, we actually walked a few rounds. Julie, I'm glad to say, is just as bad at golf as I am, which keeps our marriage strong. But the question of renting a cart became a tussle between my lazy nature and Julie's frugal German heritage.



I HIT THE BALL RIGHT TO THE MIDDLE OF THE FAIRWAY. UNFORTUNATELY, IT WAS THE *WRONG* FAIRWAY.

Then we struck upon a handy compromise. We purchased a vehicle for use in our greenhouse business which is built upon a golf cart chassis. It looks suspiciously like the beer cart that travels around slaking the thirst of golfers as they make their rounds. And when our little vehicle's day is done at our greenhouse, it spends evenings with us at the golf course. To our fellow golfers I'm sure that watching us driving around searching for balls in the rough in a vehicle that looks like a beer truck removes any doubt about our golfing abilities, or our social class.

But we're happy.

TAE *contributing writer Blake Hurst never takes mulligans.*

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Beat the Press

THE HAND THAT RULES THE PRESS...RULES THE COUNTRY—*Judge Learned Hand*

Gay Intolerance

The New York Times

According to the *New York Times*, children cannot learn about honor from the Mormon Church, Orthodox Judaism, the Catholic Church, most Southern Baptists, the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, most of the Muslim world, much of the Third World, a sizable number of American families—and, of course, the Boy Scouts of America. "In today's world," editorialized the *Times* in an attack on the Scouts' policy of barring openly gay Scout leaders, "children cannot learn about honor from an organization that views homosexuality as a moral defect."

You catch that? The *Times* isn't saying it's harder to learn about honor from "anti-gay" organizations like the Scouts; it's flat-out impossible.

Some may say I'm blowing things out of proportion. Alas, no. The *Times* is leading a very willing national press corps to the conclusion that homosexuals are the model minority for the twenty-first century, deserving of celebratory assimilation into American life.

Sometimes they even get ahead of themselves. In a front-page story by reporter Kate Zernike, the paper of record announced a major backlash against the Scouts. "Since the United States Supreme Court ruled that the Boy Scouts of America have a constitutional right to exclude gays," Zernicke wrote, "corporate and governmental support for the organization has slipped markedly."

She claimed Chicago, San Francisco, and San Jose had decided to bar the Scouts from parks, schools, and municipal sites. This was untrue. Indeed, the *Times* had to run a devastating retraction of the story—after it had been reprinted in many other papers and endlessly hyped on radio and TV—eight days after it ran, and five days after *National Review Online*, where I work, reported the errors.

The "correction" ran an astonishing five paragraphs and retracted a half-dozen separate factual inaccuracies. (Reporter Zernike still writes for the *Times*.)

The *Times*' story shouldn't surprise anyone. Last spring Rick Berke, the paper's gifted, influential (and gay) political reporter, told a conference of gay journalists, "There are times when you look at the front-page meeting" of the *Times* and "literally three-quarters of the people deciding what's on the front page are not-so-closeted homosexuals."

"LITERALLY THREE-QUARTERS OF THE PEOPLE DECIDING WHAT'S ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE *NEW YORK TIMES* ARE NOT-SO-CLOSETED HOMOSEXUALS."

This surfeit not just of gays but of liberal gays may explain why the paper takes such absolutist positions on many issues, like hate crime legislation. After the brutal murder of homosexual Matthew Shepard, the *Times* declared, "there is no adequate Federal standard of what constitutes a hate crime, and nothing could make plainer the need for one than the way young Matthew Shepard died in Wyoming yesterday."

The editorial left unmentioned Wyoming's anti-murder law, which is vigorously enforced (Shepard's murderers faced the death penalty). And yet the *Times* is sure a hate crimes law would have succeeded where the homicide laws did not.

You might say the *Times* is pushing the gay agenda, except that to speak of a "gay agenda" invites press accusations that you're delusional. Journalists refer to the "so-called" gay agenda as if it were a ludicrous conspiracy on "The X-Files."

"That concern plays to the arguments of those who believe there is a 'gay agenda,'" writes a typical reporter for *USA Today*. The authors of an article about parents seeking to ban a gay club at their local high school write, "In so doing, the trustees dodged a lawsuit threat from a group of parents opposed to what they call the 'gay agenda' in public schools." *Times* editorialist Brent Staples calls the term "gay agenda" a "code phrase" for people opposed to same-sex intimacy.

Yet the reality is that there *is* a gay agenda—it's the political agenda of activist gays, who readily admit their goals include gay marriage, adoption, hate crime laws, and the rest. The only people who refuse to admit gays have political motives are conventional liberals, loath to suggest gays are anything but a blessed model minority so pure they don't even have electoral desires.

There are many serious arguments for making space for gays in American life. They are friends and family, taxpayers and citizens, equal human beings in the eyes of God. But there are also plenty of serious arguments for insisting homosexuality is not a benign characteristic like skin color. Unfortunately, those arguments are virtually banned from public life. Just look at the room the *New York Times* leaves for people who disagree with them.

—Jonah Goldberg

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the Population Economist

We've Lots of Room for People

By Nicholas Eberstadt

The notion that human beings, through their growing numbers and their escalating levels of consumption, are outstripping the globe's capacity to sustain them is one of the most powerful economic claims of the modern era. Ever since T.R. Malthus first made these arguments in a famous 1798 treatise, many people have been persuaded that a serious "population problem" is imminent and requires immediate action.

The durability of this notion is understandable, because it sounds so plausible. The planet, after all, is of a fixed size, and at some point a finite sphere will necessarily be unable to meet a geometrically rising demand upon its resources. Moreover, every other form of life on earth is governed by the immutable and unforgiving biological laws Malthus described: the regular tendency for a species to procreate beyond its environment's capacity to feed it, only to have its numbers brought back to "equilibrium" through brutal spikes in the death rate.

Yet human beings are not like other animals. Our species, unlike all others, can use problem-solving techniques to expand resources. Beasts cannot purposely transform their survival prospects. Human beings can—and they have done so dramatically, across the entire planet.

In 1900, the expected lifespan for men and women around the world probably averaged about 30 years. Today, according to projections by the U.N., it is probably over 65 years, and in the places conventionally deemed most prone to Malthusian calamity, improvements in longevity have been especially striking. During the past half-century, according to the U.N.'s figures, life expectancy for the low-income countries known as the "less developed regions" has jumped by well over 23 years, or more than half. During that same period, the overall infant mortality rate for the poorer countries is believed to have fallen by almost two-thirds. Humanity, in short, is in the midst of a "health explosion," which entirely accounts for the unprecedented "population explosion" of the twentieth century.

These tremendous and sustained worldwide improvements in human health speak to another crucial distinction between our species and all other animals. For the same factors that have made our health revolution possible—advances in scientific knowledge, the spread of education, improvements in organizational technique, and the like—have also supported a spectacular, and continuing, increase in human productivity.

Consider the race between population and food over the course of the twentieth century. Traditional Malthusian doctrine maintains that food production cannot keep pace with mankind's ability to multiply. The twentieth century should have provided a test case for that proposition, since between 1900 and 2000 the world's population nearly quadrupled, surging from perhaps 1.6 billion to over 6 billion.

Yet this extraordinary population explosion did not consign humanity to mounting hunger. Just the opposite: Mankind enjoys a far better diet today than it did when the earth's population was only one-fourth as large.

To be sure, millions upon millions of people still live under the threat of deadly hunger. Yet such tragic circumstances are now, finally, the distinct exception rather than the rule of the human condition. The inescapable fact is that humanity has never before been as well fed as today—and our improvements in nutritional well-being coincided with the most massive and rapid increase in population in human experience. In fact, despite our species' exponentially increasing demand for food, there is compelling evidence that foodstuffs are actually growing ever less scarce.

The nearby chart makes the point. It contrasts the twentieth century's global population trends with inflation-adjusted international price trends for corn, wheat, and rice. Real prices for each of these three cereals have plummeted by over 70 percent since 1900. These declines in prices were not smooth, but the temporary upswings in food costs were mainly the result of political disruptions—World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the government-exacerbated "world food crisis" of the early 1970s—rather than environmental or demographic events.

The long-term fall in cereal prices is an important way to gauge the availability of food in the modern world. Since prices measure scarcity, falling prices mean foodstuffs are significantly less scarce at the end of the twentieth century than they were at its beginning—even though mankind is now consuming far more of them today.

The facts are undeniable: Global population has been rising at an average pace of about 1.3 percent a year for a century, and global cereal prices have simultaneously been falling nearly 1.3 percent per year. Never have more people inhabited the world than today—and never before has food been so abundantly available.

Faced with these incontestable data on the race between mouths and food, a sophisticated neo-Malthusian would retort that food is only one of many re-

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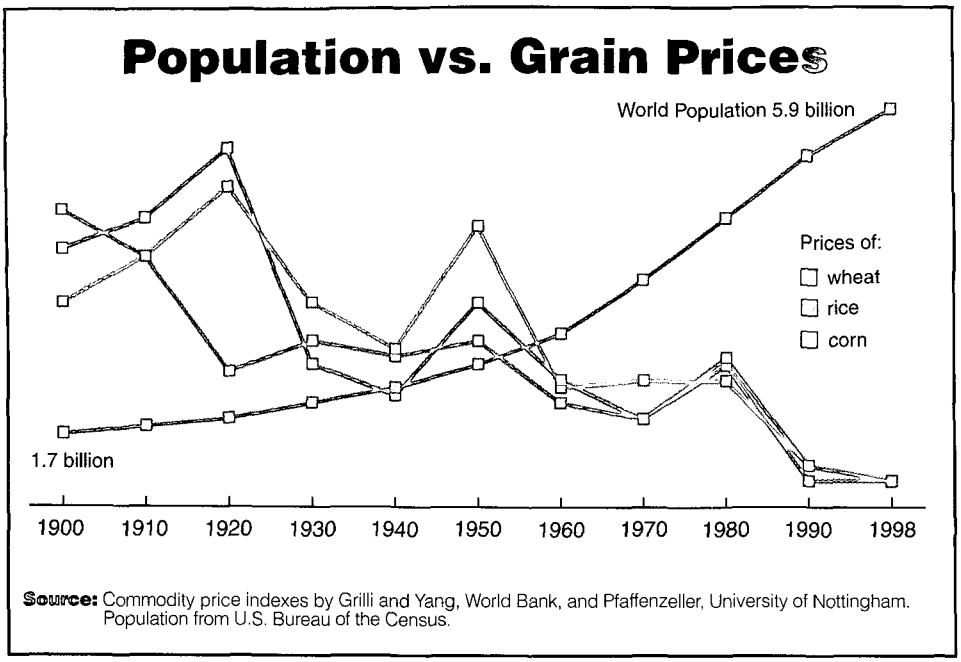

Source: Commodity price indexes by Grilli and Yang, World Bank, and Pfaffenzeller, University of Nottingham. Population from U.S. Bureau of the Census.

sources upon which people depend. And given our insatiable desire for expanding consumption, mankind's appetite for resources must eventually come into disastrous collision against some limiting natural constraint.

It is impossible today to disprove predictions about tomorrow, but the recent past does not comport with this vision of a world steadily denuded of resources by unchecked population growth and consumerism. Global natural resource constraints have actually been loosening in important areas. That paradox is illustrated by the contrast between global economic production and prices for primary commodities over the twentieth century.

The GDP estimates, prepared by eminent economic historian Angus Maddison, cover 56 countries that comprised almost 90 percent of the world's population and over 90 percent of the world's output as of 1992, and thus provide a reasonably close approximation to total global product. The primary commodity price index, developed by the economists Enzo R. Grilli and Maw Cheng Yang, takes the international cost of a market basket of 24 of the most commonly consumed "renewable and non-renewable resources"—foodstuffs, non-food agricultural goods, and metals—and adjusts for inflation. Maddison's estimates extend from 1900 to 1992; Grilli and Yang's, from 1900 to 1986. Both series are authoritative for the trends they depict.

Between 1900 and 1992, by Maddison's reckoning, global output grew at well over twice the pace of population growth, or at almost 3 percent a year. Between 1900 and 1992, this made for a 14-fold increase in the estimated planetary product. That means the global population's demand for goods and services also soared by a factor of 14.

But despite this staggering increase in demand, the relative price of non-fuel primary commodities dropped markedly. Between 1900 and 1986, the cumulative decline in the relative prices of these goods averaged –0.6 percent a year.

This primary commodity index excludes fuels. But adding oil and coal to the primary commodity market basket changes the picture only slightly. One Grilli and Yang series includes those two energy products, weighted to reflect their importance in overall trade. That particular series posts a cumulative decline of over 35 percent between 1900 and 1986, and trends downward at a pace of –0.5 percent per annum for those eight and a half decades.

Looking toward the future, Malthusians imagine that human demands upon a fragile planet are poised to rise indefinitely. Even this assumption may be wrong.

For one thing, patterns of economic activity around the globe have changed radically over the past century. As affluence has increased, the shares of overall output taken by agriculture and manufacturing—which draw heavily upon natural resources—have decreased, while the share accounted for by services has risen correspondingly. The World Bank estimates that services already make up over three-fifths of the world's total economic output. To an ever greater degree, modern economic growth is being driven by the demand for, and consumption of, human knowledge and skills rather than treasures extracted from the earth.

Second, it is far from certain that the human population will be growing in the coming millennium. In every industrial democracy in the contemporary world, fertility levels are now below the replacement level; in some of them, far below it. If continued, long-term population declines will result. Indeed, the proportion of humanity living in countries with fertility that will eventually yield population decline is rapidly approaching 50 percent. And for the rest of the world as well, fertility is falling steadily.

Reliable long-term population projections are impossible, since future birth rates are unknowable today. But if the pace of global fertility decline observed over the past 35 years were to continue for another quarter-century, human numbers would peak around the year 2040, and a world depopulation would commence thereafter.

None of this is to suggest that concern with humanity's current and prospective impact on the global environment is unwarranted. Quite the contrary. The case for conservation of, and stewardship over, natural resources is compelling. But responsible conservation and stewardship cannot be promoted by a worldview that strips mankind of its unique dignity, any more than the earth's "carrying capacity" for human beings can be established through rules and parameters derived from populations of fruit flies.

Nicholas Eberstadt holds the Henry Wendt Chair in Political Economy at the American Enterprise Institute.

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Flashback

TO KNOW NOTHING OF WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE YOU WERE BORN IS TO REMAIN EVER A CHILD—*Cicero*

New Deal Turkey

As you prepare to dig into the turkey and stuffing this November 23, STOP! You've got the wrong day.

George Washington issued the first National Thanksgiving Proclamation on November 26, 1789, but our early Presidents, disproportionately Virginian and of a states' rights disposition, regarded such commemorations as excessively Yankee and Federalist. Even John Quincy Adams, the ultimate codfish President, was reluctant to be seen as "introducing New England manners" nationwide by a public acknowledgement of Thanksgiving.

The antebellum New England novelist and editor Sarah Josepha Hale is to Thanksgiving what Stevie Wonder is to Martin Luther King Day. The indefatigable Hale propagandized ceaselessly for the glory of late November Thursdays, pumpkin pie, roasted turkey, "savory stuffing"—everything but the Detroit Lions. It took 35 years and a civil war, but Mrs. Hale's efforts paid off when President Lincoln declared the last Thursday in November a national day of Thanksgiving and a legal holiday.

Andrew Johnson, ever the contrarian, designated his first Thanksgiving Day in December, but his successor, Ulysses Grant, began a 70-year practice by re-setting the date to the last Thursday in November. Still, the states were free to go their own ways, and Southern governors often opted for idiosyncratic observances or none at all. As Thanksgiving historian Diana Karter Appelbaum notes, Texas Governor Oran Milo Roberts refused to declare Thanksgiving in the Lone Star State, remarking, "It's a damned Yankee institution anyway." But the South, too, eventually succumbed to this succulent and sacred day.

Then along came Franklin Roosevelt.

It seems that Thanksgiving was to fall on November 30 in 1939, a matter of consternation to the big merchants of the National Retail Dry Goods Association (NRDGA). The presidents of Gimbel Brothers, Lord & Taylor, and other unsentimental vendors petitioned President Roosevelt to move Thanksgiving to the previous Thursday, November 23, thus creating an additional week of Christmas shopping—and to the astonishment of those Americans without dollar signs in their eyes, the President did so. (Not all merchants favored the shift. One Kokomo shopkeeper hung a sign in his window reading, "Do your shopping now. Who knows, tomorrow may be Christmas.")

Opinion polls revealed that more than 60 percent of Americans opposed the Rooseveltian ukase; dissent was especially vigorous in New England. The selectmen of Plymouth, Massachusetts, informed the President, "It is a religious holiday and [you] have no right to change it for commercial interests." Thanksgiving is a day to give thanks to the Almighty, harrumphed Governor Leverett Salstonstall of Massachusetts, "and not for the inauguration of Christmas shopping."

Although the states customarily followed the federal government's lead on Thanksgiving, they retained the right to set their own date for the holiday, so 48 battles erupted. As usual, New Deal foes had a monopoly on wit, if not votes. A New Hampshire senator urged the President to abolish winter; the Oregon attorney general versified:

> Thirty days hath September,
> April, June, and November;
> All the rest have thirty-one.
> Until we hear from Washington.

"THANKSGIVING IS FOR THE ALMIGHTY, AND NOT FOR THE INAUGURATION OF CHRISTMAS SHOPPING," HARRUMPHED THE GOVERNOR.

Twenty-three states celebrated Thanksgiving on November 23, and another 23 stood fast with November 30. Two states, Colorado and Texas, shrugged their shoulders and celebrated both days—Texas did so to avoid having to move the Texas/Texas A&M football game.

This New Deal experiment in Gimbelism lasted two more years, until finally the NRDGA admitted that there was little difference in retail sales figures between the states that celebrated Thanksgiving early and those that clung to the traditional holiday. Without fanfare, President Roosevelt returned Thanksgiving 1942 to the last Thursday in November. Mark Sullivan noted that this was the only New Deal experiment FDR ever renounced.

Just as Roosevelt's refusal to observe the two-term tradition set by George Washington necessitated the 22nd Amendment, so did his flouting of Thanksgiving precedent require corrective legislation. In a compromise of sorts, FDR signed into law a bill fixing Thanksgiving as the *fourth* Thursday—not the last Thursday—in November. Never again would Thanksgiving fall on November 29th or 30th. The states followed suit, although Texas held out until 1956.

This year, as it happens, Thanksgiving falls on a Roosevelt day: November 23. So as you fight the traffic on November 30—the real Thanksgiving—give a thought to Sarah Josepha Hale, and thank FDR for that extra week of Christmas shopping.

—Bill Kauffman

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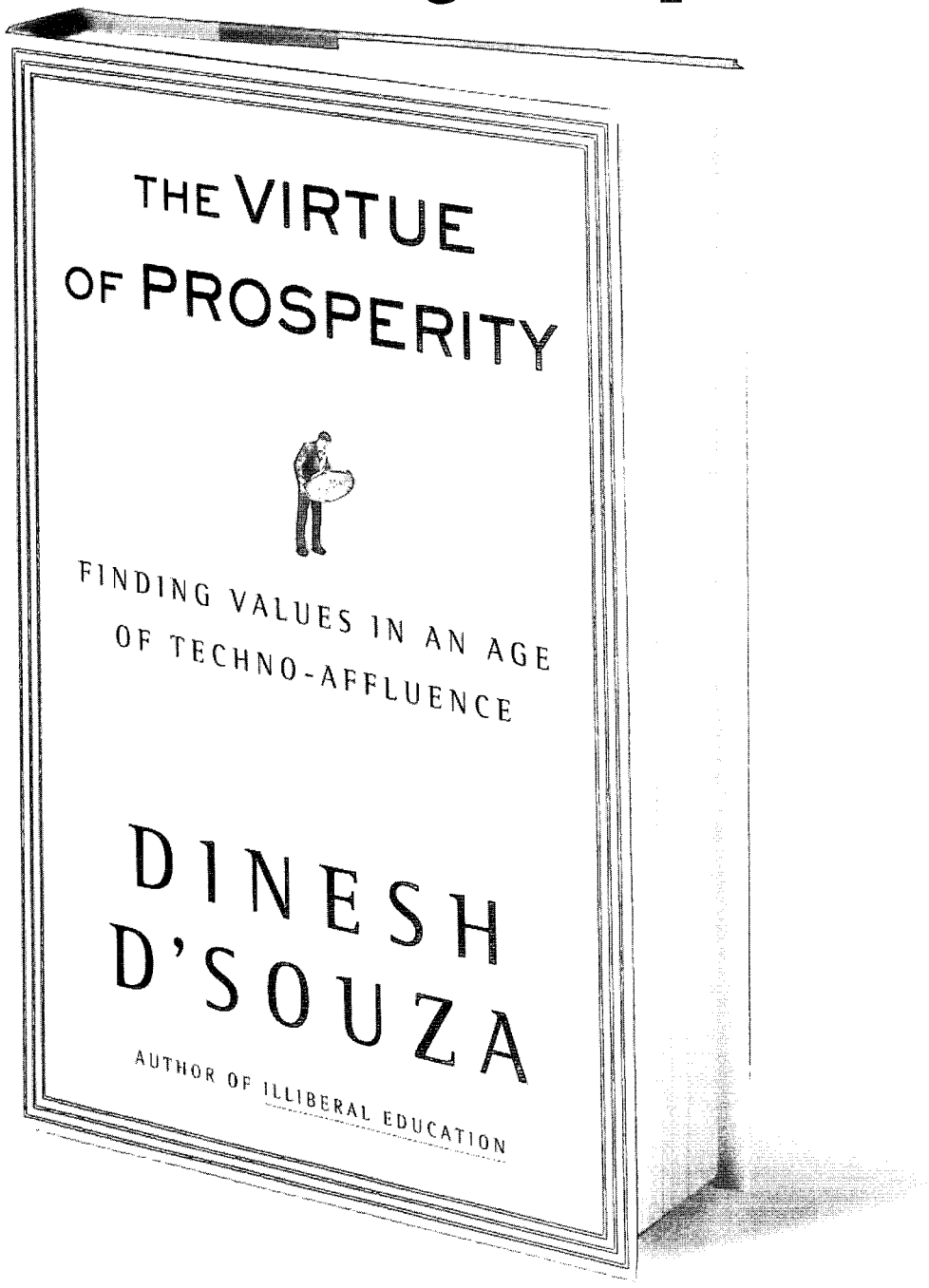

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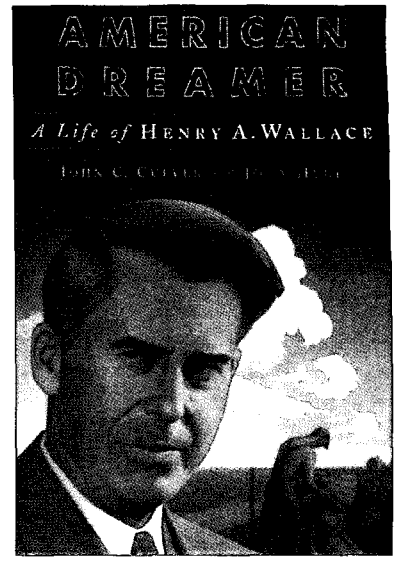
Booktalk



LORD CORN WALLACE

By Blake Hurst

American Dreamer: A Life of Henry A. Wallace
By John C. Culver and John Hyde
Norton, 608 pages, $35

Henry Wallace was weird. In their very sympathetic biography, former Iowa Senator John Culver and reporter John Hyde make much of his brilliance, integrity, and principled approach to the practice of politics. But even 531 pages of hagiography cannot hide the fact that Iowa's most famous son was strange.

Born on a farm in southwest Iowa, offspring of a Secretary of Agriculture, and a third-generation journalist, Wallace is best known for serving as FDR's Vice President in Roosevelt's third term, and for his unsuccessful run for President as the candidate of the Progressive Party in 1948.

His most important contribution, however, was in agriculture. Wallace founded the Pioneer Seed Company and was the first to successfully commercialize hybrid seed corn. Until Wallace used his bully pulpit as editor of *Wallace's Farmer* to popularize a scientific approach to the selection and breeding of corn, farmers chose their seed by appearance alone. When Wallace established the first yield contest in Iowa in 1920, corn yields had been unchanged for a generation. Wallace won his own yield contest with a hybrid corn in 1924, and from that point on, corn farming was never the same. Today, farmers are still planting Pioneer corn, and the national yield has increased fivefold.

Wallace was also a pioneer in the field of econometrics, and his book on statistics was the standard text for statisticians for many years. Amidst this early genius Wallace began a lifelong search for spiritual sustenance, as well as periodic flirtations with some unique choices in physical sustenance, including one period when he ate nothing but soybeans.

The authors chronicle his split from the Presbyterian Church and remark that for the next decade and a half, "he explored the spiritual universe, sometimes to its outer reaches." The authors are too gentle, as Wallace's flirtation with various gurus and religious hustlers was most unsettling in a man of his power, and some of his correspondence with religious instructors formed the basis for scandals.

The Wallace family was Republican, and Henry's father served as Secretary of Agriculture to President Harding. But his father's bitter feud with Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, and the Harding administration's refusal to aid farmers in the post-World War I agricultural depression, led Henry to change parties. In 1924, he voted for Senator Robert La Follette, and by 1932 he was advising FDR on agriculture.

A pre-election trip to Hyde Park in the summer of 1932 combined the two dominant strands in the strange life of Henry Wallace. On his way to consult with Roosevelt about the farm crisis, he made a side trip to the Iroquois Indians. That visit was undertaken because the future Vice President was convinced he had been an Iroquois warrior in an earlier life. The visit to FDR cemented Wallace's appointment as the next Secretary of Agriculture, and Iroquois tribal elders assured him that he had, indeed, been an Iroquois warrior.

Wallace's tenure as agriculture secretary was successful, but as the authors point out, it was dominated by a paradox at least partially of his own making. Farmers were suffering from overproduction and low prices, and Wallace spent his tenure as secretary trying to control production through various supply-management schemes. Meanwhile his Pioneer Seed company supplied farmers with the tools to achieve huge increases in production.

As agriculture secretary, Wallace became a leading spokesman for the liberal wing of the New Deal and was rewarded by being nominated for Vice President in 1940. At the beginning of Roosevelt's third term, Wallace was entrusted with huge responsibilities as head of the Economic Defense Board and may well have been the most powerful Vice President in American history. But by 1944, he had lost several internal battles in the administration and was out of favor.

The authors spend much time on the 1944 Democratic convention and the political maneuverings that led to Wallace's replacement on the ticket by Harry S. Truman. The villain in *American Dreamer* is Robert Hannegan, a St. Louis pol, Democratic Party national chairman, and staunch Truman supporter. Roosevelt sent decidedly mixed signals about his choice for Vice President, and Hannegan used his wiles to place Truman on the ticket. Culver and Hyde clearly think that Truman was responsi-

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ble for the Cold War, and that, had Wallace been nominated and subsequently become President, the postwar history of U.S.-Soviet relations would have been much smoother. To those who take another view of postwar history, Hannegan and his allies are unsung heroes. Practical politics may not be pretty, but at least in this instance, odiferous backroom maneuverings by party hacks led to an extremely desirable conclusion.

Wallace began the Truman administration as Secretary of Commerce, but his views on foreign policy soon provoked a public and messy split with the administration. He landed at *The New Republic* where he advanced a worldview that saw Britain as the enemy, Russia as a misunderstood friend, and the Truman administration as responsible for every point of contention between America and the Soviet Union. By 1948, he was running for President at the head of the Progressive Party, with a foreign policy that can only be described as pro-Soviet.

The bibliography for *American Dreamer* lists most of the recent literature detailing the vast Soviet spy apparatus in the U.S., but the text ignores the fact that many of the people surrounding Wallace during his public career were Soviet spies. Wallace's leading advisor on foreign affairs, Laurence Duggan, and economist Harry Dexter White, an important consultant on domestic affairs, were both Soviet operatives. A casual reader of the book would not know this, because as far as Culver and Hyde are concerned, there were no Communists, just rabid anti-Communists. Culver and Hyde don't answer the question of whether Wallace was a Communist, a "useful idiot," or in Clare Boothe Luce's memorable phrase, "Stalin's Mortimer Snerd," because they don't ask what is the most important question about Wallace's career.

Wallace lost the 1948 election, finishing fourth, behind even Strom Thurmond and the Dixiecrats. He retired to upstate New York, moved to the right politically, and enjoyed great success as a chicken-breeder. He started his career as a farmer, ended it as a farmer, and was never far removed from his agricultural background. No better proof can be found than his meager ($1,000) personal financial contribution to his 1948 race, even though by that time his interest in Pioneer had made him a wealthy man. No self-respecting Iowa corn farmer would spend over a thousand dollars on a lost cause, and Wallace, no matter how far he traveled, was still a farmer.

TAE *contributing writer Blake Hurst is a Missouri farmer who plants mostly Pioneer Seed corn.*

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH

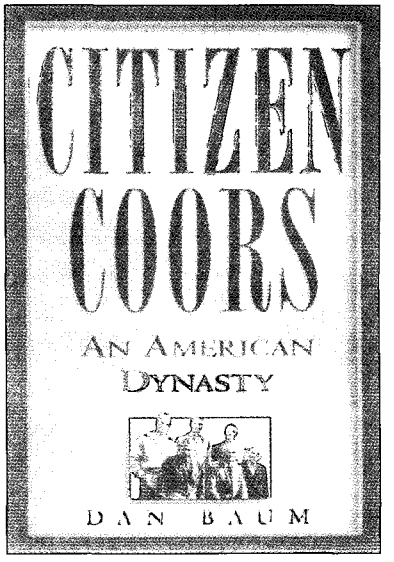
By Jonathan Ellis

Citizen Coors: An American Dynasty
By Dan Baum
William Morrow, 352 pages, $27

In 1873, a German immigrant named Adolph Coors fathered a small brewery that would become one of Colorado's most important and controversial businesses. He wasn't interested in owning another run-of-the-mill business. He wanted to brew quality beer his way, controlling every step in the process. Soon he owned a malthouse, steam mill, bottling plant, and icehouse. By 1890, Adolph—who had landed in America as a penniless stowaway—was a millionaire. With three sons being groomed to take over, his legacy looked to last as long as beer-drinking men roamed.

Then came that quintessentially American era, Prohibition, and Coors was out of the beer business. Prohibition buried hundreds of breweries, but the Coors Company would live to brew again. Years before, Adolph realized that teetotalers might one day turn the nation against his industry, so he shrewdly diversified into other businesses. While the brewery had enough resources to hibernate through that dark age, Adolph decided he'd had enough of Prohibition and committed suicide in 1929.

Today, the Coors family is known almost as much for its politics as for its beer. In the 1960s, Bill and Joe Coors—grandsons of Adolph Sr.—became vocal supporters of limited government and



free enterprise. Dan Baum traces the family's conservatism back to Prohibition. That "was the family's Iliad, a maelstrom of conflicts that defined the world and the Coorses' place within it. Government was the main enemy; with an imperious wave of its too-powerful hand, it had annihilated everything for which the Coors family stood."

Citizen Coors is neither hatchet job nor hagiography. Baum has penned a balanced work in which his ideology remains backstage. The first-rate narrative focuses on the complexities and contradictions swirling in the Coors universe, where brilliance and bungling, magnanimity and vindictiveness, all commingle.

Many of America's venerable businesses have seen their share of labor problems. Back in Prohibition, Adolph Sr. converted his brewery to produce malted milk and near-beer so his employees wouldn't be thrown out of work. The new products "were at best break-even propositions," says Baum. "Expecting [his workers'] gratitude, Adolph asked them to take a pay cut to help the business get through Prohibition. Instead, the workers went on strike." Adolph Jr. convinced his father to fire the strikers.

Adolph Jr. made peace with organized labor after Prohibition by inviting the Brewery Workers Union to organize Coors. Labor disputes erupted occasionally in the next few decades. By the 1970s, Bill and Joe Coors resolved to run the union out.

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The story of Bill and Joe outfoxing and then breaking their brewery's union makes for eye-opening reading, as does organized labor's counteroffensive. When Coors went non-union in 1978, David Sickler, an AFL-CIO officer and former Coors employee, spearheaded a union boycott. Sickler figured he could use the Coorses' politics against them by recruiting enemies of conservatism to the boycott. Soon blacks, Hispanics, gays, feminists, and environmentalists joined what *Citizen Coors* calls one of "the most effective consumer boycotts of modern times."

The boycott bled Coors at a time when it was already getting thrashed by its competition. In 1969, Philip Morris dived into the beer business by acquiring Miller Brewing Company. Philip Morris had won its share of marketing campaigns in the cigarette business, and it was ready to do the same with beer. Miller and Anheuser-Busch launched massive ad campaigns in an all-out brawl for market share. But at Coors, where marketing was a dirty word, business went on as usual.

Bill Coors believed a quality product would always triumph over marketing. Baum reports that in blind taste tests, consumers overwhelmingly chose Coors over Miller Lite. To Bill, "the hotshot marketers at Miller and Anheuser-Busch were nothing but Visigoths—loud brutes in fancy ties.... They had no roots, no loyalties, no core."

Maybe Bill was right about marketers, but he was dead wrong about marketing. Coors learned a lesson that almost killed it: A significant number of consumers will trade quality for vacuous advertising jingles.

Today, Coors survives, even thrives, but to Baum it looks more like a typical major corporation than the family business it resembled even 20 years ago. Turn on a ball game and chances are good you'll run across a Coors ad. But the Coorses are still Colorado's First Family. They continue to support conservative causes, and best of all, they still make a good beer.

Jonathan Ellis writes from Denver, Colorado.

THE JOYOUS LIBERTARIAN

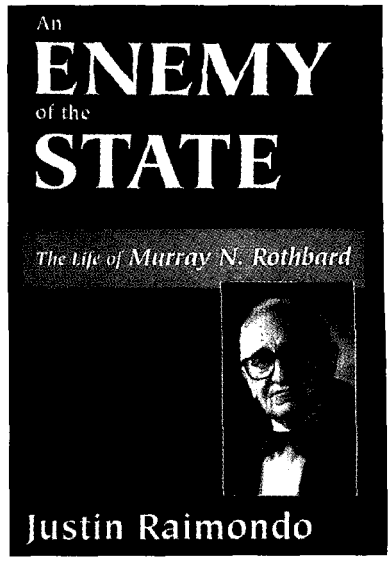
By Paul Gottfried

An Enemy of the State: The Life of Murray N. Rothbard
By Justin Raimondo
Prometheus, 400 pages, $35

Murray Rothbard, the subject of this spirited biography by journalist Justin Raimondo, his admiring disciple, made a practice of "never compromising" his Old Right, anti-welfare state convictions. As Rothbard stressed in his partisan tracts and as a gray eminence of the Libertarian Party, compromises on principle are disastrous for the embattled American Right, because the concessions move the acceptable political conversation further and further leftward.

Such views caused Rothbard to be judged an "extremist" even in conservative and mainstream libertarian ranks. Although many of his practical judgments seem to have been unseasonable rather than wrong, it is hard to read Raimondo's study without noticing Rothbard's passion for controversy. Whether lecturing his Jewish socialist relatives on the anti-Communist merits of Spanish strongman Francisco Franco, expressing support in 1948 for Strom Thurmond's presidential candidacy, or rallying the anti-war forces in the 1960s to oppose the "Cold War liberal" struggle in Vietnam, one could always count on Murray to stir up debate.

In the face of the arduous efforts undertaken by William F. Buckley,Jr. to create a unified anti-Communist postwar Right, Rothbard incited disagreement, specifically over what he thought was the substance of American republicanism. Opposing Communism never seemed to him a sufficient justification for living under what might be permanently a "welfare-warfare state." He fought no less strenuously against libertarians opposed to political authority and traditional moral restraints. Rothbard made no secret of his traditionalism, as shown in both his exemplary marriage to his lifetime partner, JoAnn, and his repeated defense of the Christian-Aristotelian interpretation of natural law.



Remarkably, his following included both uncompromising libertarians and profoundly reactionary critics of the managerial state. As a friend of Rothbard, I found it astonishing how often the two of us agreed and how much I learned from him, despite our apparently incompatible worldviews. Unlike Murray, I do admire the state historically, while fearing and loathing what it morphed into in the last century. But without Murray's historical and economic writings I would not have come to understand the modern transformations of American government.

Rothbard was far more than a controversialist. It was the superabundance of his work—which includes American economic histories (like his well-researched and provocative study of the Great Depression), histories of economic thought, theoretical economic studies developing the central ideas of his mentor Ludwig von Mises, and highly technical examinations of banking—that make it hard to think of this author as a single person.

Rothbard's unexpected death in 1995, at age 69, was a loss to American learning, but more poignantly to his friends and disciples. Raimondo documents the sociability and generosity of Rothbard and his wife. We are poorer human beings for no longer having them in this world.

Paul Gottfried's most recent book is After Liberalism *(Princeton University Press).*

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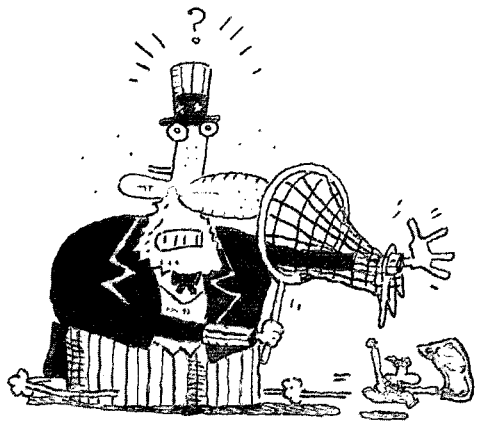
EDITED BY MARTIN MORSE WOOSTER

the Digest

SUMMARIES OF IMPORTANT NEW RESEARCH FROM THE NATION'S UNIVERSITIES, THINK TANKS, AND INVESTIGATIVE PUBLICATIONS



ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

Consumption Matters

Daniel T. Slesnick, *Living Standards in the United States*. AEI Press, 1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

National income statistics suggest America has considerable economic inequality. But Slesnick, an economist at the University of Texas, Austin, suggests looking at what Americans actually consume, not what they earn. Consumption data, he writes, more accurately reflect standards of living, and they show more equality than earnings statistics do.

Using income to determine standards of living is misleading. The Census Bureau bases its wage data on pre-tax income, ignoring money lost to taxes and also ignoring in-kind income such as food stamps and other government benefits. Also, the Census only counts as "families" persons legally married. Unmarried couples who live together (about one-third of all couples in America) aren't considered families; so their combined incomes aren't counted, even though many childless couples have high double incomes.

Better guides to standards of living, Slesnick argues, are the Consumer Expenditure Surveys (CES) of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which very carefully measure household spending. CES data show more equality than income statistics suggest. In 1995, the richest 30 percent of Americans earned 8.4 times as much as the poorest 30 percent. By contrast, in that same year, the richest 30 percent of Americans only *consumed* 3.9 times as much as the poorest 30 percent—because wealthy Americans tend to pay more taxes and to save more than low-income households.

Consumption data also provide insights into the nature of poverty. By calculating poverty based only on earnings, the Census includes retired, young, or self-employed people with fluctuating earnings who are actually living comfortably despite low paper incomes. If being poor is defined by consumption, on the other hand, the poverty rate has for years been half the income-based estimate.

The federal government, Slesnick concludes, often uses differences in "average income levels" to justify big new social programs. Better to use "consumption-based social welfare statistics" that will "more accurately identify" the truly needy.

Disabled by Uncle Sam

James M. Taylor, *Facilitating Fraud*. Cato Institute, 1000 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.

Changes must be made to the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program, argues Taylor, managing editor of *Accommodating Disabilities Business Management Guide*. SSDI consumes 14 percent of the Social Security budget, paying out $57 billion in 1999 to persons allegedly so disabled they could not work.

In the '90s, SSDI's budget grew 77 percent, and the number of recipients rose 47 percent. Since SSDI hearings are secret, it's hard to know how many claims are fraudulent. Taylor found 43 cases in which a recipient claimed job discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) while also receiving SSDI:

• One doctor worked for Kemper Life Insurance using a computer six to eight hours a day. He developed carpal tunnel syndrome; after undergoing surgery he failed to return to work. He later filed an ADA suit, claiming Kemper wouldn't provide reasonable accommodation or give him his old job. A judge was dubious, saying the doctor could still teach, administer health insurance plans, or practice medicine. The doctor stated he had not seen patients for several years and could not relocate to a better job market because of his large mortgage. Social Security now pays the man over $100,000 a year.

• A worker at the Shield Institute of David, which aids people with disabilities, helped patients in and out of wheelchairs. After presenting a chiropractor's note claiming he'd injured his back, the worker was transferred to a job feeding patients. He didn't like his new job because he couldn't eat lunch when he wanted; so the Institute transfered him to the dining room. He quit, saying dining room jobs were "women's work." Three years later Social Security awarded him disability payments—backdated to the day he quit.

• A textile worker for Stowe-Pharr Mills requested and received a transfer to a plant with concrete floors. Eventually fired for misconduct and absenteeism, she sued under the ADA. She claimed various ailments only allowed her to work on wood floors; therefore her employer should have transferred her back to her old plant

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instead of firing her. A judge rejected this claim, noting she had engaged in misconduct, such as revealing her bare buttocks to other employees, at her old job site as well. She still qualified for SSDI checks.

Taylor suggests overhauling the appeals process, which allows a claimant to apply for benefits up to five times, and giving independent watchdog groups power to overturn questionable SSDI awards. These changes, he says, may delay Social Security's impending bankruptcy.

SOCIETY

The Virtues of Learning at Home

Brian C. Anderson, "An A for Home Schooling," in *City Journal* (Summer 2000), Manhattan Institute, 52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, New York 10017.

In the '90s, homeschooling became increasingly common. The top three winners in this year's National Spelling Bee were homeschooled, and Stanford accepted 27 percent of homeschoolers who applied, a rate twice as high as public school graduates. According to a former Department of Education researcher, about 1.5 to 2 million schoolchildren (3 to 4 percent) are homeschooled.

City Journal editor Anderson finds several reasons parents homeschool. About two-thirds of homeschoolers are devout Christians or Jews disgusted with public schools they see as immoral. Many families think homeschooling strengthens familial bonds. "There's this sense that we're involved in a project in life together," says University of Tennessee historian Wilfred McClay, who homeschools his two sons.

Foes of homeschooling claim kids don't learn well at home and are unable to make friends. But University of Maryland statistician Lawrence Ludner looked at test scores from 20,000 homeschooled kids and found they consistently scored far above the national average on standardized tests. And the average homeschooler has a combined SAT score 67 points higher than the national average.

Nor do these children lack friends. The average homeschooled child's life is full of activities outside the home, such as Scouting, 4-H, and music and art classes. A University of Florida grad student videotaped 70 homeschool and 70 public school eight- to ten-year-olds playing, and showed the tapes to professional counselors without identification. The counselors could find only one difference: The homeschooled kids were better behaved.

Much work remains to be done to advance homeschooling. Some states still over-regulate; New York, for example, requires parents to teach "AIDS awareness" and "substance abuse." The Home School Legal Defense Association reports many social workers see homeschooling as a "risk factor" for child abuse.

But homeschooled children, Anderson finds, are virtuous and productive. Homeschooling succeeds in "educating kids successfully, invigorating civil society, and reaffirming family values."

OTHER COUNTRIES

How Privatization Is Affecting Latin America

Mark Falcoff, "Regionalist Momentum in the Southern Cone," in *Orbis* (Summer 2000), Foreign Policy Research Institute, 1528 Walnut Street #610, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102.

As privatization and free trade advance around the world, some nations have struggled to adapt to changing times. AEI resident scholar Falcoff notes the ways economic changes have affected Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay.

For much of the twentieth century, Argentina had a steadily expanding government and an aggressive army that nearly went to war with Chile and plotted to invade Brazil. But defeat by Britain in the Falklands War of 1982 "had a devastating long-term impact on Argentine politics," including a restoration of democracy and a dramatic shrinking of the military.

Under the 1989-99 tenure of conservative President Carlos Menem, Argentina underwent massive privatization, selling the telephone system, electrical plants, state airlines, and "the state oil company, long a sacred cow for nationalists of all hues." The result: substantial foreign investment and a stabilization of the currency, allowing long-term mortgages to be offered for the first time. Thanks to partial privatization of social insurance programs, companies no longer have to borrow from overseas, but can rely on domestic capital.

Between 1973-88, dictator Augusto Pinochet stabilized Chile's out-of-control economy. After Pinochet's resignation, Chile spent most of the '90s under a grand coalition of Christian Democrats and Socialists who preserved his free-market policies. The 1999 election of a Socialist president will not likely result in major change, since Ricardo Lagos is ideologically "closer to Britain's [centrist] Tony Blair or Germany's Gerhard Schroder than to any historic icon of the Latin American Left."

Uruguay's economy has changed the least during the 1990s. It has rejected privatization in favor of a Scandinavian-style welfare state, blocking proposed reforms by the country's last three Presidents. The country survives on tourism, remittances sent by Uruguayans living overseas, and a semi-secretive banking system.

The U.S. has far less presence in the region than during the Cold War. But we could aid the region by admitting Chile into the North American Free Trade Agreement. Incorporating Chile into NAFTA, Falcoff writes, "would also serve U.S. interests by demonstrating that priority is being given not to market size, but to the quality of a country's economic management—a lesson that cannot be taught too often."

Taiwan Bounces Back

Arthur Waldron, "The 'Chineseness' of Taiwan," in *Policy Review* (August/September 2000), Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Avenue N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

In 1949, after losing a vicious civil war, Chinese strongman Chiang Kai-shek retreated to Taiwan. For 51 years, Chiang and his successors called Taiwan the "Republic of China"— a continuation of the government which ruled the mainland from 1911-49—and claimed in the near future Beijing and Taipei would reunite.

But in March, Chen Shuibian came to power pledging Taiwan would be independent of the mainland. Chinese President Jiang Zemin vowed revenge, and bombardment of the offshore islands of

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Quemoy and Matsu resumed. But Waldron of AEI says it's unlikely Chen's presidency will lead to an Asian crisis.

The Chinese military, according to Waldron, isn't prone to adventurism. China has about 250 missiles that can be hurled at Taiwan, causing "as much as an earthquake...which means not enough to win." But an attack would result in a trade ban by America. The resulting crisis in the Chinese economy would end the détente that has existed between the Chinese people and their rulers since the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989, when China's rulers guaranteed higher living standards in return for staying in power.

President Chen, Waldron advises, would do well to avoid dramatic gestures and work to maintain Taiwan's vibrant democracy and productive economy. Such moves would inspire quasi-democratic Hong Kong to push towards full democracy, and might set an example for mainland China's very productive coastal cities.

Taipei and Beijing also should begin negotiations: If Taiwan accepted the notion of "one China" in return for China's opening numerous personal and cultural exchanges, it "would create a vast web that would draw them closer together." Such a plan would allow Chinese President Jiang to achieve the "big breakthrough" he so desperately wants, while also advancing peace and economic growth in the two nations.

How the U.N. Learned to Dislike Families

Allan C. Carlson, "'The Family' at the United Nations: What Went Wrong?" in *The Family in America* (August 2000), Howard Center, 934 North Main Street, Rockford, Illinois 61103.

U.N. documents on society often attack traditional families, but Howard Center president Allan Carlson says this wasn't always the case: Early U.N. documents had a surprising amount of pro-family material.

Many U.N. founders were part of the Christian Democratic movement rooted in the ideas of French philosophers like Emmanuel Mournier, Étienne Gilson, Étienne Borne, and Gilbert Dru. They believed that Catholics and Protestants needed to unite against Fascists and Communists, and that society must reinvigorate the "natural social structures"—such as neighborhoods, towns, unions, and families—that predated the state.

Christian Democrats dominated the committees drafting documents from 1946-48. Thus the U.N.'s Declaration of Human Rights states, "the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society...entitled to protection by society and the state," and also calls for a "family wage" to allow one worker to earn enough to feed, clothe, and house his family.

But Christian Democracy collapsed by the '50s. In France the Christian Democratic Party died when Charles de Gaulle came to power in '58, while in Italy and West Germany the parties survived only by becoming non-ideological. The U.N.'s intellectual vacuum was filled by Democratic Socialists, who dominated the Secretary General's office in the tenures of Norwegian Trygve Lie (1946-53) and Swede Dag Hammarskjöld (1953-62). Under the influence of Swedish feminist Alva Myrdal, the U.N. slowly began adopting resolutions favoring moral relativism, "gender equity," and socialized day care.

Although socialists have dominated the U.N. for the last 40 years, Carlson says that is not inevitable. "The contest for the intellectual control of the United Nations continues," he writes, "and the status of the family is still at the core of this struggle."

McWhorter continued from page 43

while black college students occupy administrators' offices crying "racism" at the very schools that admitted them with scores that would have barred any white student from admission. It's time for America to try something else. We must realize our current race problems cannot be solved in any way other than allowing black people the dignity of true competition.

I'm not in anybody's pocket, and yes, both of my parents were African American. Yet I am quite aware that the response many black people will have to my arguments is that I have joined the "other side," aiding whites who are "against us."

There remains a tendency in the black community to classify as "cool" people who express the view that America remains a racist purgatory in which all black effort is a ceaseless struggle just to keep one's head above water. All our lives we have heard the best and brightest black Americans telling us black Americans are exempt from criticism for even the most heinous of conduct, because it's all white America's fault. Such views, existing from the dankest inner city to the poshest boardrooms, are a serious obstacle to our race's progress forward. As compensation, I ask those black Americans who find themselves unable to identify with the self-indulgent theatrics now forced upon us by whites and blacks alike to come out of hiding and start speaking up.

While not falling prey to the equally treacherous fiction that we have completely overcome, we must not be tempted by the seductions of underdoggism into turning a blind eye to how very close we are to the mountaintop. This progress is so gloriously obvious that there are more and more black people out there with true pride. Not a manufactured pride based on a mythical relationship to an Africa that never existed and that none of us would any longer even recognize as home, but a pride based on our personal achievements right here in our real home, these United States of America.

As we reject the enshrinement of victimhood there will be those who call us "sell-outs." But as barriers to black achievement continue to fall away by the month, we're going to keep coming, more every year, black people from all walks of life. The national dialogue is beginning to change already; I would not have written on this subject if I did not feel I was part of a growing race-wide sentiment. The ones calling the tune today will be curiosities in the history books tomorrow. We are the future. It's time for us to STAND UP!

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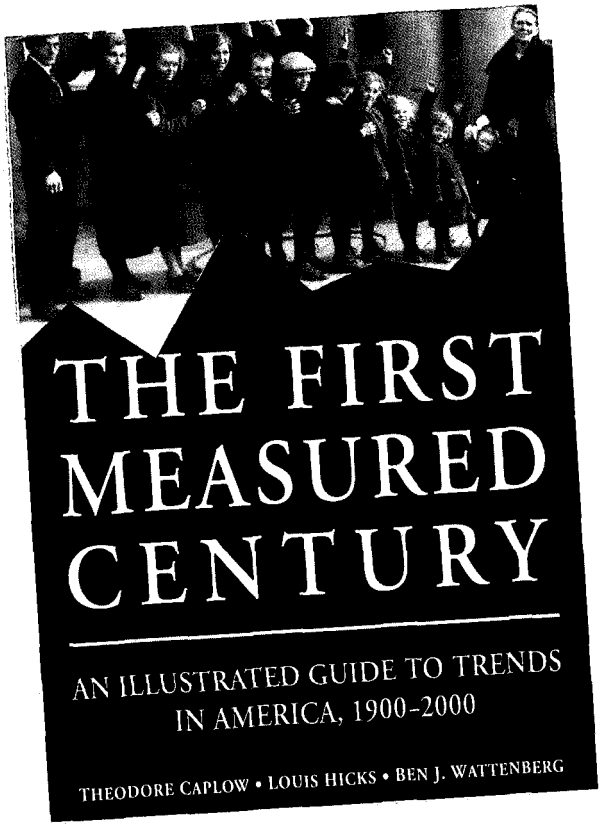
HISTORY AS YOU'VE N

A major, prime-time PBS show and companion book go beyond anecdotes to reveal surprising trends that define twentieth-century America.



"*The First Measured Century* is arguably the first statistical profile of the American nation that is a joy to read. The authors know what matters, and know how to get the reader involved. Better still, engaged! This is a public service of the first order. And more. Most of us know a good many things that just aren't so. Here is a wondrously noninvasive way of getting things straight for a change."

—Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.)

"*The First Measured Century* is a fascinating portrait of American society across the twentieth century. This compendium should spark as many disputes as it settles, which is perhaps its chief beauty."

—Matthew Frye Jacobson,
Yale University

"The graphs are simply beautiful."

—Steve Nock, University of Virginia;
author, *Marriage in Men's Lives*

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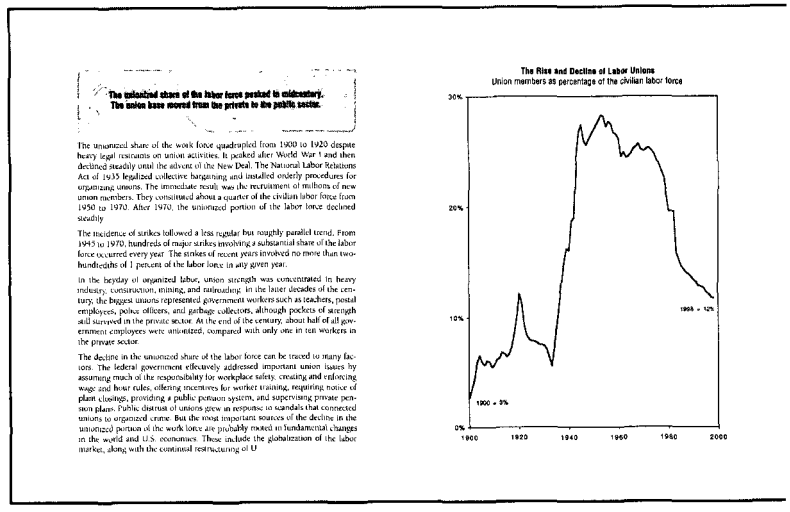
The unionized share of the labor force peaked in midcentury. The union base moved from the private to the public sector.

The unionized share of the work force quadrupled from 1900 to 1920 despite heavy legal restraints on union activities. It peaked after World War I and then declined steadily until the advent of the New Deal. The National Labor Relations Act of 1935 legalized collective bargaining and installed orderly procedures for organizing unions. The immediate result was the recruitment of millions of new union members. They constituted about a quarter of the civilian labor force from 1950 to 1970. After 1970, the unionized portion of the labor force declined steadily.

The incidence of strikes followed a less regular but roughly parallel trend. From 1945 to 1970, hundreds of major strikes involving a substantial share of the labor force occurred every year. The strikes of recent years involved no more than two-hundredths of 1 percent of the labor force in any given year.

In the heyday of organized labor, union strength was concentrated in heavy industry, construction, mining, and railroading. In the later decades of the century, the biggest unions represented government workers such as teachers, postal employees, police officers, and garbage collectors, although pockets of strength still survived in the private sector. At the end of the century, about half of all government employees were unionized, compared with only one in ten workers in the private sector.

The decline in the unionized share of the labor force can be traced to many factors. The federal government effectively addressed important union issues by assuming much of the responsibility for workplace safety, creating and enforcing wage and hour rules, offering incentives for worker training, requiring notice of plant closings, providing a public pension system, and supervising private pension plans. Public distrust of unions grew in response to scandals that connected unions to organized crime. But the most important sources of the decline in the unionized portion of the work force are probably rooted in fundamental changes in the world and U.S. economies. These include the globalization of the labor market, along with the continual restructuring of U

The Rise and Decline of Labor Unions
Union members as percentage of the civilian labor force
30%
20%
10%
0%
1900 = 9%
1998 = 14%
1900
1920
1940
1960
1980
2000

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ER SEEN IT...

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THE FIRST MEASURED CENTURY

THE OTHER WAY OF LOOKING AT AMERICAN HISTORY

The twentieth century is now a finished chapter in human history. What is worth remembering? A thousand tales of heroism and hardship, to be sure: Lindbergh and the Titanic, the Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression, the world wars and Vietnam. But there are more than just stories and anecdotes; the last hundred years also saw the rise of social science, which offers a new way of telling America's story. The twentieth century was truly the first measured century, a time when the disparate activity of human life came to be seen as quantifiable and people set out to change the world using data.

PBS *The First Measured Century* is a three-hour documentary that explores the trends that defined twentieth century America, focusing on the stories of those who did the measuring, their triumphs and failures, and the burning controversies they started. From Julia Lathrop's data-driven crusade to reduce infant mortality, to George Gallup's bold wager that put the public opinion poll on the front page forever, to Daniel Patrick Moynihan's controversial analysis of the breakdown of the black family, *The First Measured Century* demonstrates how public policy came to be driven by numbers.

Among those interviewed are Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Betty Friedan, Milton Friedman, Paul Volcker, William Julius Wilson, Glenn Lowry, Francis Fukuyama, James Q. Wilson, Daphne Spain, Alan Brinkley, George Gallup Jr., Staughton Lynd, and Seymour Martin Lipset.

Join host-essayist Ben Wattenberg for a look at history as you've never seen it.

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—Sandra Heberer, Director, News and Information Programming, PBS

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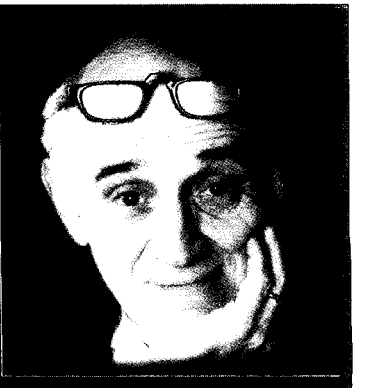

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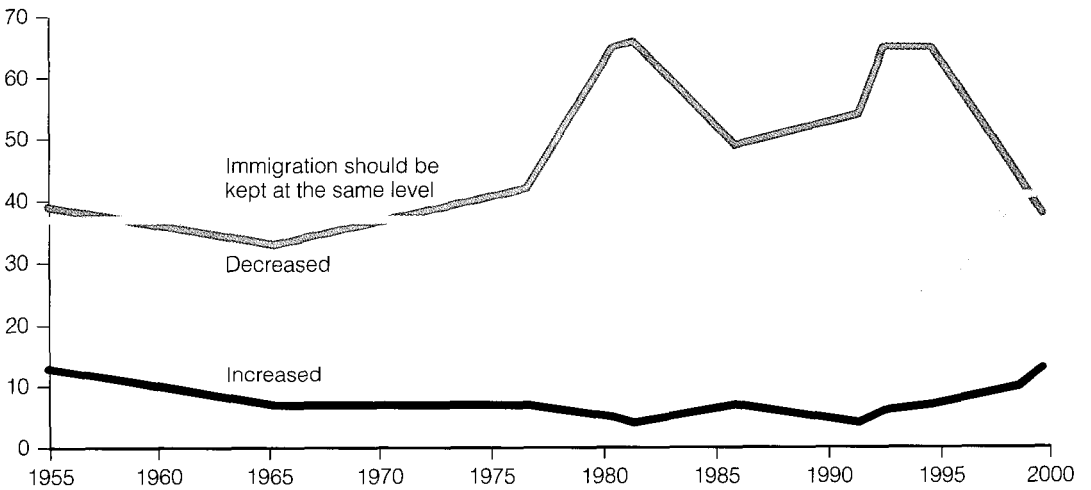
Opinion Pulse

EDITED BY KARLYN BOWMAN

PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRATION

Economic good times may be improving Americans' views on immigration. Although we don't want to increase immigration, the highest proportion in half a century says that it should be kept at the level it is now. Around four in ten, down from more than 60 percent the mid-1990s, say it should be decreased. Americans believe immigration has been a good thing for the country in the past, but are evenly divided about its impact today. The view that immigrants take jobs that American workers don't want is widespread.

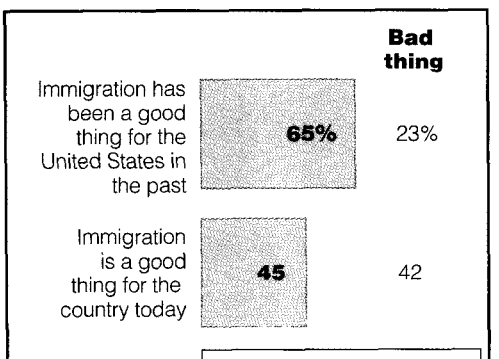
Question: In your opinion...?



In 1995, the Gallup Organization conducted a special poll of immigrants in America. Because the sample was large, Gallup was able to look at the views of immigrants who had been in this country a short time and those who had been here longer. Among the many interesting findings: immigrants who had been here more than 20 years were twice as likely as those who had been here for 10 years or less to say immigration should be decreased (36 –19 percent).

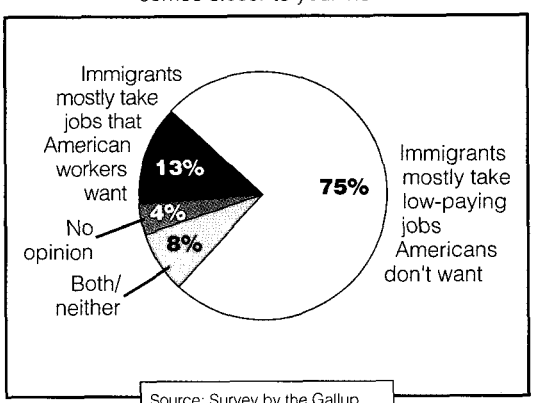
Note: Question wording varies
Source: Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center, 1955; Roper Starch Worldwide, 1982, 1992; NBC News/Associated Press, 1981, 1992; CBS News/*NYT*, 1986; the Gallup Organization, 1965, 1977, 1986, 1993, 1995, 1999, 2000.

Question: We'd like your views about immigration to this country, that is, people coming from other countries to live in the United States. On the whole, do you think...?



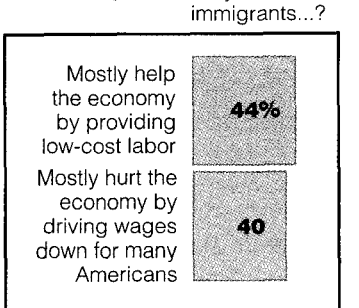
Source: Survey by Princeton Survey Research Associates for Knight Ridder, May 1997.

Question: Which of the following statements comes closer to your view...?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, September 2000.

Question: Do you think immigrants...?



Note: In 1993, 28 percent said they mostly help and 64 percent said they mostly hurt.
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, September 2000.

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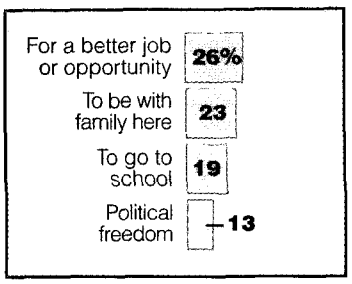
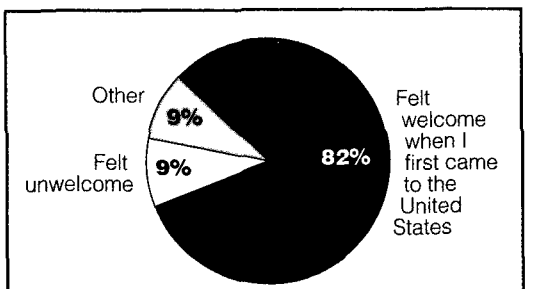
ATTITUDES OF IMMIGRANTS

Immigrants tell survey researchers that they felt welcome when they first came to this country. They are more likely than the population as a whole to believe that people who work hard can get ahead in America. Most immigrants feel that it is better for immigrants to blend into American culture. Job opportunities, political freedom, and justice are better in the United States, they say. Crime and moral values are better in their homelands. Fewer than 20 percent of immigrants say they have ever received any kind of welfare benefit.

Question: Which of the following would you say was the most important reason you came to the United States...?

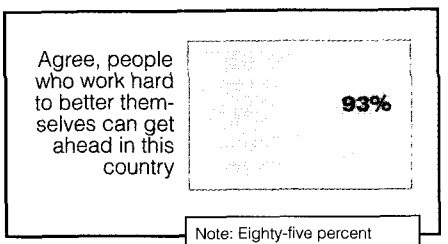


Question: Did you ...?



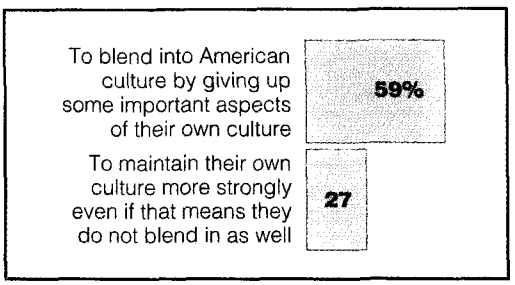
Note: In another question in the survey, 54 percent said their feelings toward the United States today were more positive than they were before they came, and 26 percent said more negative.

Question: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements...?

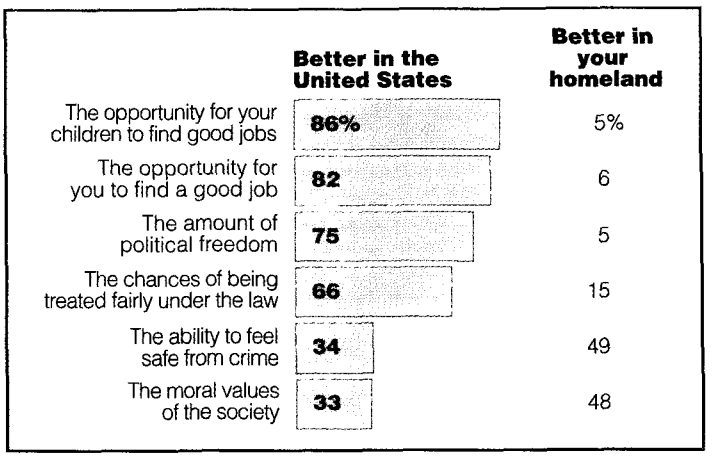


Note: Eighty-five percent in a survey of all Americans by Gallup in June 1995 gave that response.

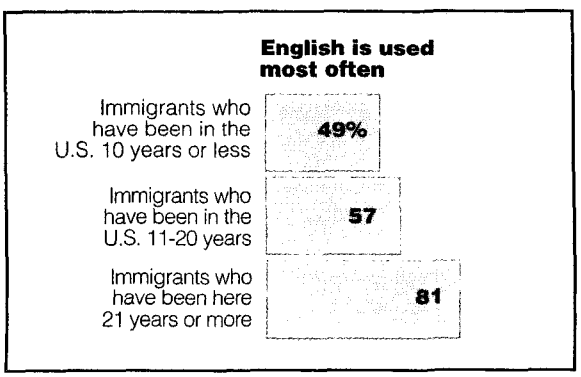
Question: Which do you think is better for the United States—to encourage immigrants...?



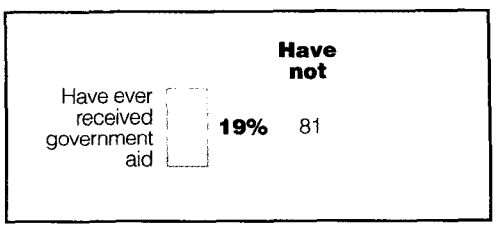
Question: ...Please compare the United States to your homeland...?



Question: What language is used most often in your home?



Question: Have you ever, because of sickness, unemployment, or any other reason— received welfare, food stamps, Medicaid, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, or any other similar form of aid from U.S. government agencies?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, May-June 1995.

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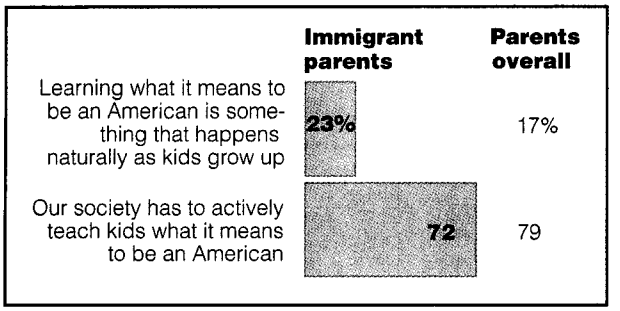
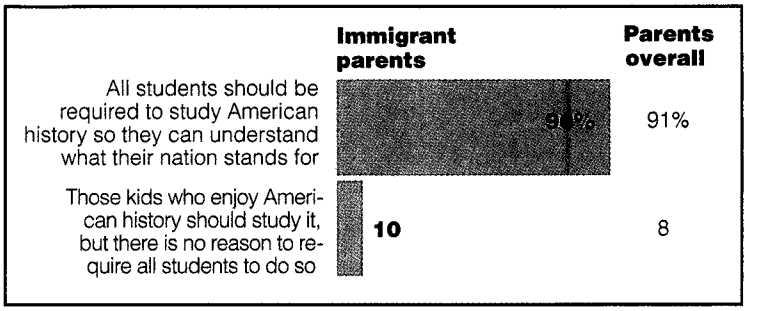
Immigrant Parents on Ideals, Values, and the Schools

Immigrant parents' ideas of what the United States stands for and what children should be taught are remarkably similar to the views of all parents. Immigrant parents believe our society has to teach kids actively what it means to be an American. Ninety percent say all students should be required to study American history. They believe school is where children should learn about America and that ethnic and racial pride should be taught at home. Immigrant parents are more likely than parents overall to favor English language immersion for their children.

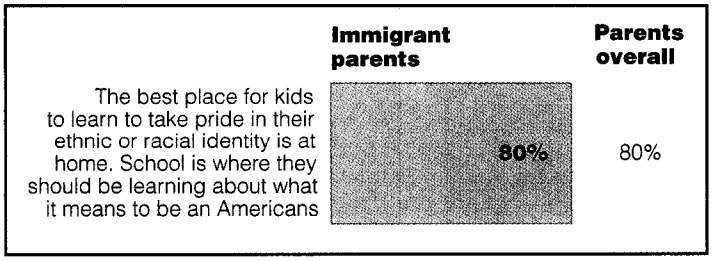
Question: Do you think...?



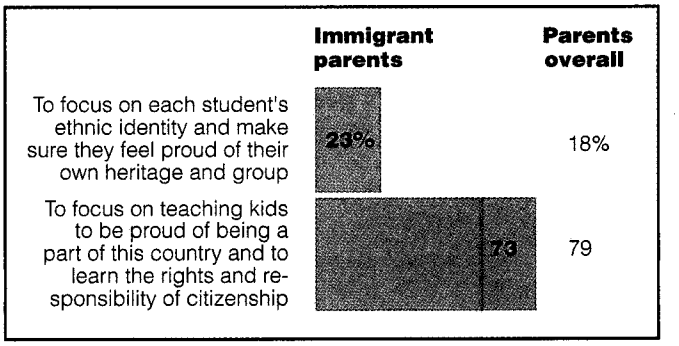
Question: Which comes closer to your own view?



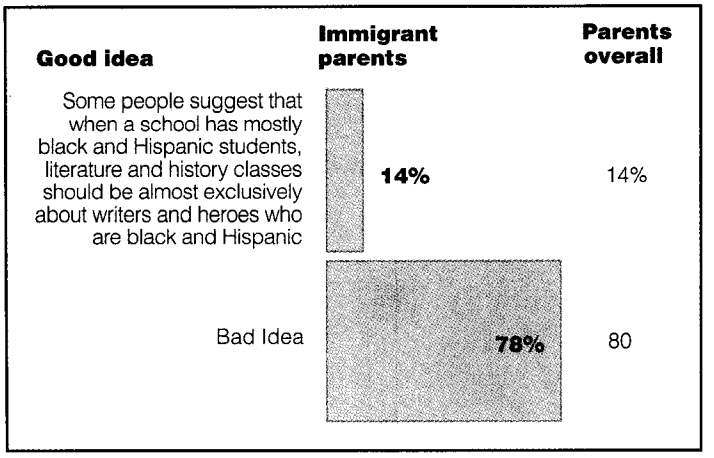
Question: How closely does each of the following statements about the public schools come to your own view?



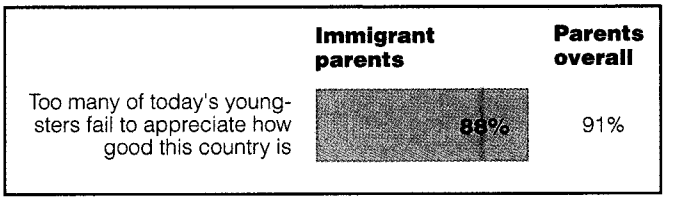
Question: What should be a bigger priority for your own children's schools?



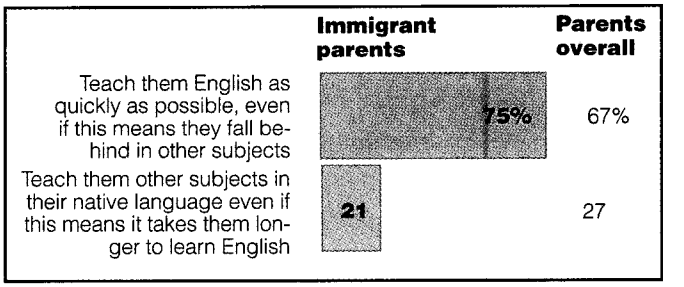
Question: Do you think this is a ...?



Question: Do you think...?



Question: When it comes to students who are new immigrants, is it more important for the public schools to...



Source: Survey by Public Agenda, September 1998.

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the Mail

Though there are some excellent articles in the September issue, the one that stands out is James Webb's "Heroes of the Vietnam Generation." I was in the Air Force from 1969 to 1972, and although the closest I came to the war was a Southern California air base, even back then I appreciated what our Marines, sailors, and soldiers went through in Vietnam. One day future generations will recognize Vietnam vets as real heroes of the twentieth century. Mr. Webb's article puts all American war heroes in the proper perspective.

Dennis Hitchens
via the Internet

Your September issue on heroes came yesterday, and as usual was very interesting. However, I notice your authors occasionally make references to "winning" the "Congressional Medal of Honor." First of all, the correct name for the award is Medal of Honor—period. The word "Congressional" is often tacked on, but it is just not correct. I know the *New York Times* uses it, but should they set the standard even when they are wrong? Also, combat medals are never "won"; they are awarded. The individual awarded is a recipient or holder of that medal, be it the Purple Heart, Silver Star, or Medal of Honor, not a "winner."

MSGT David W. Menard, USAF (Ret.)
Huber Heights, Ohio

Congratulations for your issue on heroes, which reminds us how ersatz heroes have replaced the authentic heroes of our youth.

A glance at public buildings tells the tale. In the past, schools were named for military heroes or political leaders; now they are often named for teachers unknown outside the National Education Association. The mediocrity of American public education is signaled by schools named for mediocre citizens.

Regarding John Rodden's "The Teacher as Hero": Ordinary life may have all of the drama, passion, and kindness that Rodden describes. But it lacks heroism, that special quality which, by definition, is not found in ordinary life. We cannot celebrate heroism if we are all heroes. And heroic teaching is as silly as heroic dentistry.

F.H. Buckley
George Mason Law & Economics Center

Thanks for the great articles about "Big D" Dallas (October/November). Sounds like the spirit of enterprise has made some cultural inroads. A generation after J.R. Ewing shaped the city's image, capitalism has triumphed in Dallas. (Meanwhile, J.R.'s other favorite activities, adultery and treachery, have been thriving in the Oval Office and the West Wing!)

Jim Kearney
Marina del Rey, California

When Mitchell Muncy and I decided five years ago to start a publishing house dedicated to serious nonfiction, we wondered whether our venture would suffer because of its Dallas address. Would we be cut off from the intellectual centers of the East Coast? Would reviewers and bookstore buyers take us seriously? Sure, this is a great place to be if you're in semiconductors or real estate, but would anyone in his right mind try to do serious publishing in Dallas?

For reasons that your October/November profile of our city makes clear, I have never doubted we are in the right place. In his perceptive BIRD'S EYE, "Land of the Meat Eaters," Karl Zinsmeister perfectly describes Dallas in two sentences: "It can be a dizzying place, sometimes maddeningly unreflective. But it is also one of the most refreshingly uncalcified places I've ever spent time in." For an idea-mongering enterprise like ours, this city of mavericks is the ideal home.

The downside of a city "built on a powerful hunger for growth and self-improvement and a love of freedom" (Zinsmeister on the nose again) is that it easily disregards what little history it has. No charming 1920s bungalow, for example, is safe from the wrecking ball here. At the same time, Dallas is relatively innocent of the relentless war on tradition that has degraded cities like Boston in so many ways.

Last Sunday, as I sat in our splendid Cistercian abbey church hearing a Mass accompanied by the polyphony of the choir of the University of Dallas (the city's intellectual jewel, inexplicably ignored in your report) and graced by preaching of rare insight and eloquence, it occurred to me that one would be hard pressed to find such a service in any of the old Catholic metropolises of America. This city without a past at least is not at war with the past. For a conservative, that's a source of no small comfort.

Thomas Spence
Spence Publishing Company

CORRECTION: In "Sister Power" (SCAN, October/November), Mari Thompson is misidentified as Mary Compton.

The American Enterprise welcomes your comments. Send to "The Mail," The American Enterprise, 1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Or fax to (202) 862-5867. Or e-mail TheAmericanEnterprise@compuserve.com. Please include your address and phone number. Published letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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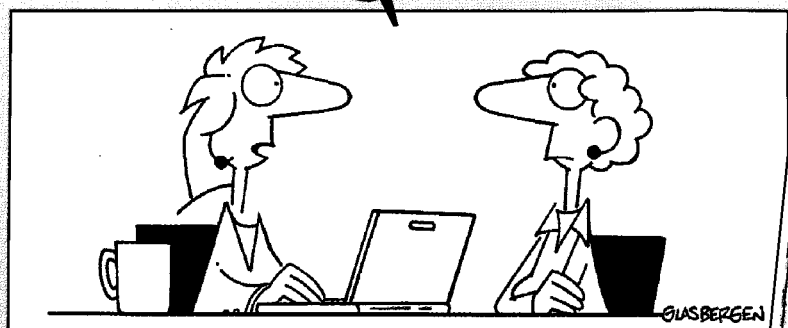
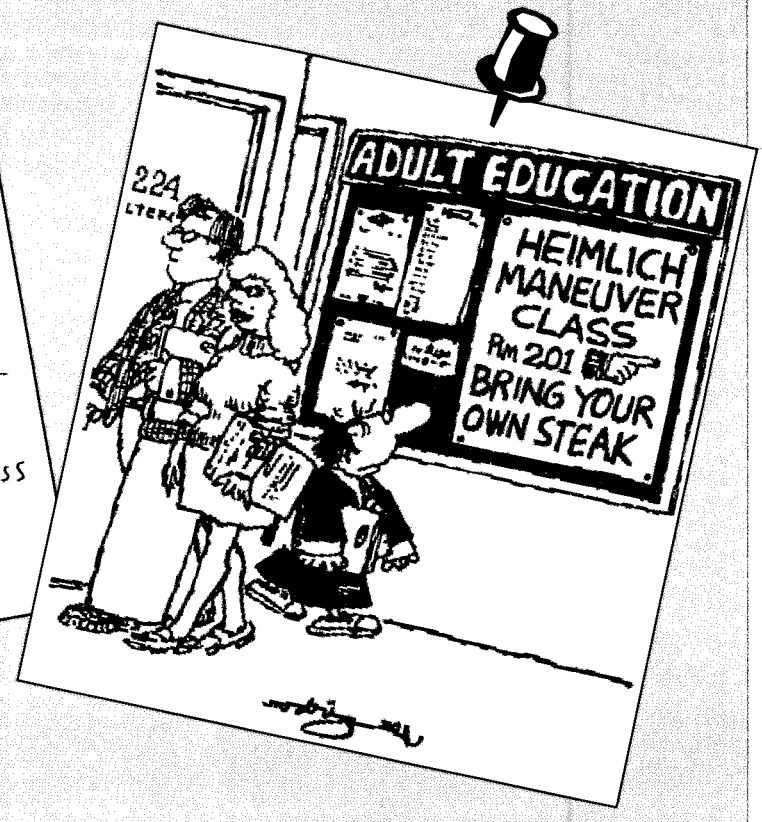


"He's dot-com and I'm dot-net, but we've decided to raise the children as dot-org."

Dist. by Universal Press Syndicate/Bizzaro

They were originally bred to hunt for subatomic particles.



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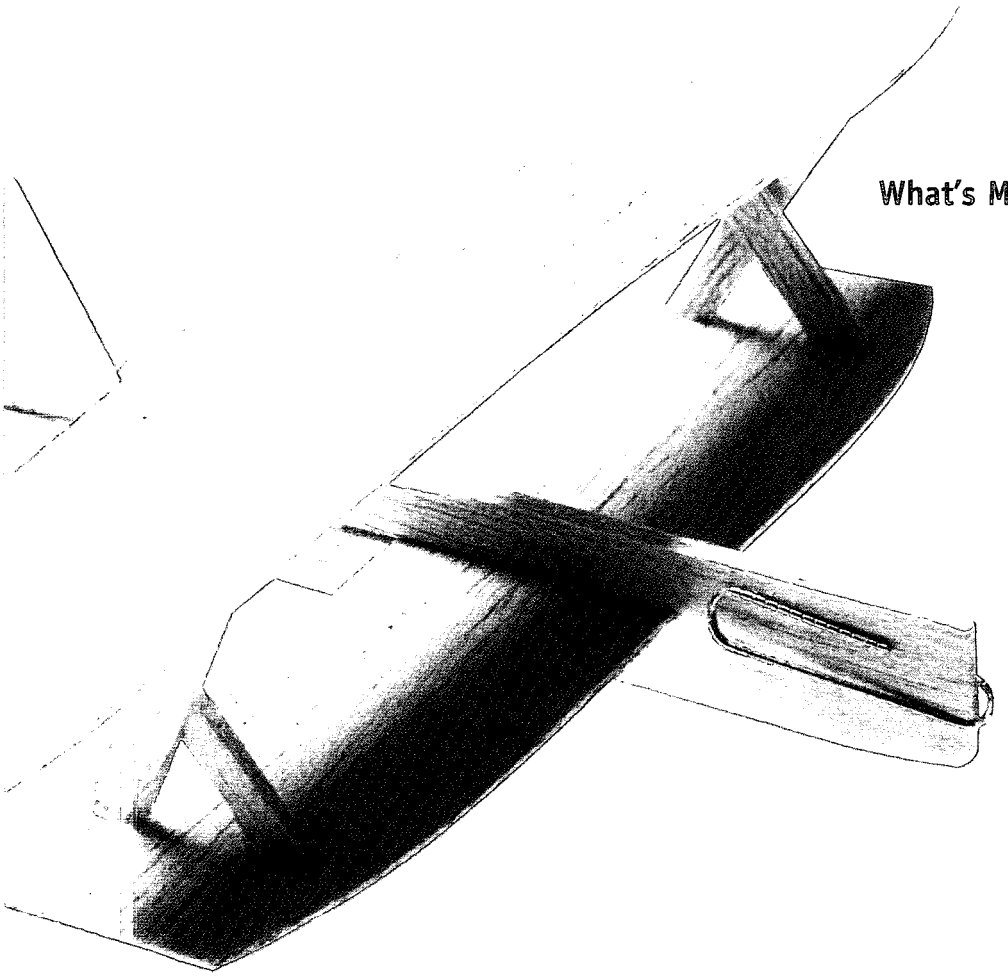

What's Mr. Robinson's class up to now?

75 feet to be exact. That's how high some of the machines they've built will fly. These gravity-defying gizmos are just part of Jason Robinson's innovative, hands-on approach to teaching aerodynamics to his fourth graders.

For getting his kids sky-high on physics and science, State Farm is pleased to present Mr. Robinson with our Good Neighbor Teacher Award™ and to donate $5,000 to his school, Taylor Elementary, in Cleveland, Tennessee.

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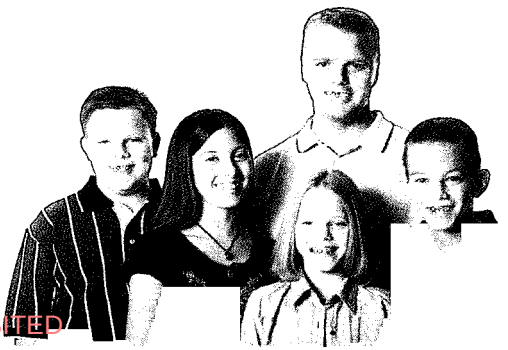

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Your coworkers think it's good.

Your boss thinks it's good. And it is good.

But good is only half a block from average.

And great is all the way uptown.

Forbes
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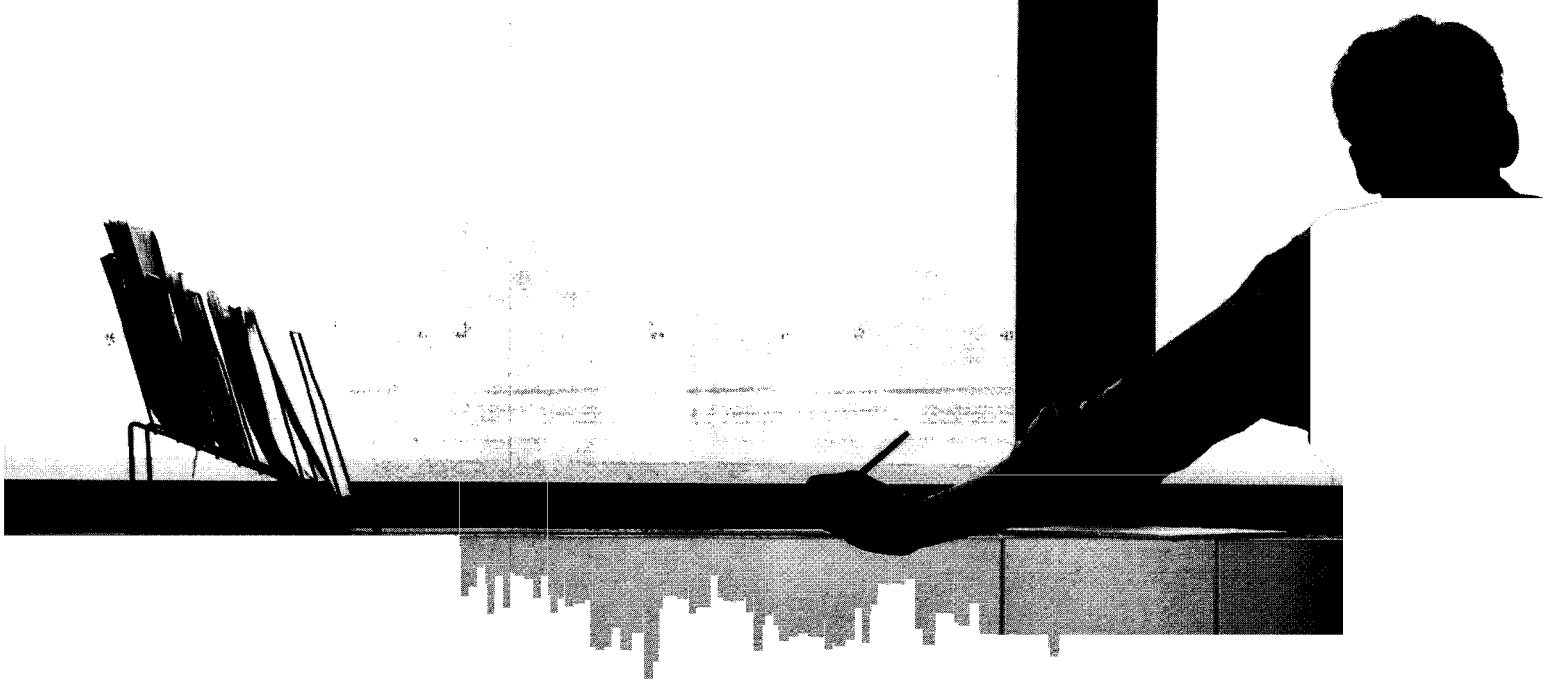

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